Verfasser: Baskerville

Titel: Polish Jew

Signatur: Jud. 4291

Band:

nbn:de:hebis:30-180014291002

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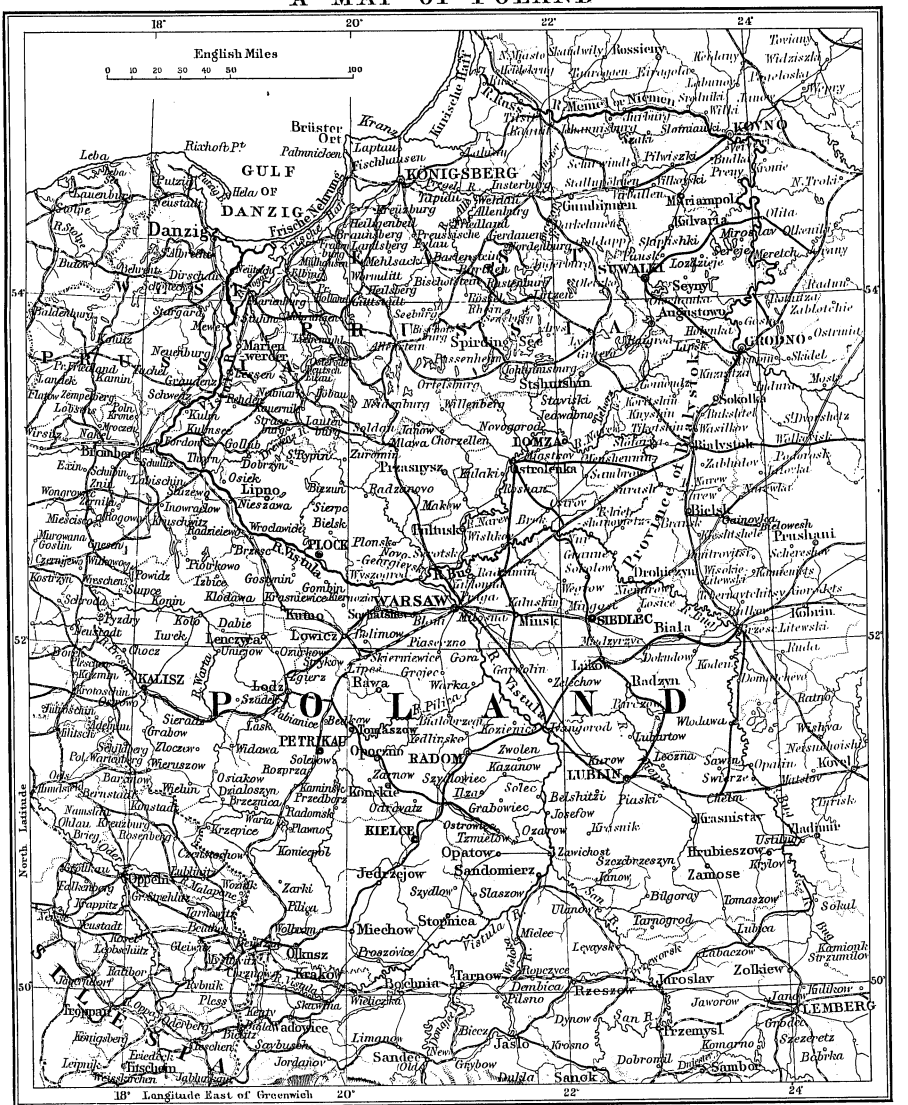
THE POLISH JEW

A MAP OF POLAND


English Miles
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18°
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North Latitude
18° Longitude East of Greenwich
20°
22°
24°
GULF OF DANZIG
DANZIG
Danzig
KÖNIGSBERG
Pillau
Memel
KOVNO
Mariampol
Suwalki
Seyny
Lomza
Augustowo
GRODNO
Ostrolenka
Pultusk
Nowogrod
Makow
Mlawa
Chorzellen
Prasnysz
Radzanowo
Plonsk
Wyszogrod
Sochaczew
Blonie
Mszczonow
Grojec
Gora
Skierniewice
Rawa
Piaseczno
Grodzisk
Tarczyn
Garwolin
Lukow
Radzyn
Kock
Leczna
Sawin
Opalin
Wlodawa
Biala
SIEDLEC
Mordy
Latowicz
Minsk
Kalushin
Wengrow
Sokolow
Drohiczyn
Wysokie
Mazowiecki
Bielsk
Prushani
Kobrin
Litowski
Brzesc
Janow
Kamieniec
Litowski
Pinsk
Lenczyca
Inowlodz
Lowicz
Dabie
Koto
Kutno
Lodz
Zgierz
Pabianice
Bedkow
Tomaszow
Grabow
Sieradz
Widawa
Wieruszow
Kalisz
Ostrzeszow
Krotoschin
Rawicz
Fraustadt
Lissa
Gostyn
Kosten
Schlichtingsheim
Schildberg
Pleschen
Rawitsch
Gostyn
Wschowa
Fraustadt
Powidz
Slupca
Konin
Klodawa
Gambin
Inowraclaw
Strzelno
Mogilno
Znin
Wongrowitz
Schubin
Exin
Bromberg
Thorn
Gollub
Strasburg
Lautenburg
Neidenburg
Soldau
Neumark
Marienwerder
Stargard
Dirschau
Neustadt
Putzig
Rixhoft Pt.
Heia
Frische Nehrung
Frische Haff
Elbing
Mohrungen
Allenstein
Hohenstein
Ortelsburg
Johannisburg
Lyck
Oletzko
Angerburg
Goldap
Pillkallen
Insterburg
Gumbinnen
Stallupönen
Schirwindt
Kibarty
Wilkowischki
Pilwiszki
Virbalis
Simnas
Kalvarya
Olita
Merecz
Lida
Grodno
Ostrowiec
Skidel
Wolkowisk
Bielostok
Zabludow
Sokolka
Wasilkow
Tykocin
Lomza
Ostrolenka
Pultusk
Makow
Przasnysz
Ciechanow
Mlawa
Soldau
Neidenburg
Willenberg
Neumark
Strasburg
Gollub
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Krotoschin
Rawicz
Fraustadt
Lissa
Gostyn
Kosten
Schlichtingsheim
Schildberg
Pleschen
Rawitsch
Gostyn
Wschowa
Fraustadt

THE POLISH JEW

HIS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE

BY

BEATRICE C. BASKERVILLE

LONDON

CHAPMAN AND HALL, LTD.

1906

Jud.
4291

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
BREAD STREET HILL, EC., AND
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

STADTBIBLIOTHEK
FRANKFURT AM MAIN.

TO

MY BROTHER GEORGE

PREFACE

MANY of the facts put forth in the following pages are so much at variance with accepted opinions of the Polish Jew—both in Great Britain and the United States of America—that I have been advised to preface them with the assurance that they are not the outcome of a short visit to Poland, but the result of eight years' residence in the country. During this time I have had every opportunity of observing the Polish Jew both in the towns and settlements, and have been in contact with the leaders of thought on all sides of the question from the Anti-Semite to the Jewish nationalist. I have witnessed the growth of that revival which has now spread throughout most of the settlements and all the large ghettoes of the country, and which has engendered hostility to the Gentile and revolution against the powers that be. The fact that thousands of the men and women here discussed annually emigrate to compete with the English-speaking nations has caused me to investigate their social and economic value the more carefully, both for the sake of the pauper aliens themselves and for that of the peoples among whom they eventually settle.

Warsaw,
August 11, 1906.

ERRATA

There will be found to be some dissimilarity between the spelling of names in the text of the book and in the map. The only important differences are as follows :—

For Petrikau *in the map read* Piotrkoff.
„ Krakow „ „ „ Cracow.
„ Czenstochow „ „ Czenstochova.

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PART I

THE POLISH JEW OF TO-DAY

THE POLISH JEW

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS—POPULATION—THE TWO GROUPS —THE GHETTO: THE JEWISH SETTLEMENTS

To those whose impression of the Polish Jew is derived from the pauper alien, who see him shuddering, half-starved and weary in the slums of European cities, hustled from pillar to post, gesticulating and gibbering in a strange, uncouth tongue, always in groups but ever forlorn, with noise on his lips and patience on his face; he appears to be nothing more than an unwelcome stranger, an economic burden, too loathsome to be likeable, too ubiquitous to be interesting. And yet behind those strongly-marked features and restless eyes; behind that unwholesome countenance and strange jargon, lie the mystery of a great influence and the shadow of a great peril; for the outcasts who crowd the emigrant ships represent a race that, hated and despised though it be, holds a sway in the Russian Empire it does not wield elsewhere; a sway, which is the more powerful because it is silent, more dangerous because it is unfelt, more deadly because it has eaten into the very sap of

the community, into the every detail of life and every action of the Sclavonic race. Here under the northern skies and in the dominions of an autocratic ruler, in the vast empire of which Europeans know so little ; in this mysterious land of many peoples, where life flows easily and time is of little account, where women rule and men submit, where the Sclav dreams and the Semite schemes, the children of Israel play a rôle which cannot but interest the English-speaking race that has seen enough of the Jewish emigrant to fear that his presence, hitherto but a troublesome question, may shortly assume all the proportions of a problem.

But as it is impossible to understand Russia's Revolution without studying her history and character, so it is necessary to understand the Sclavonic temperament in order to appreciate the character of the Polish Jew ; for centuries of influence have been brought to bear upon it by the fact that when a Russian or a Pole has a troublesome task to perform, he has grown so accustomed to appeal to the Hebrew that the action has become second nature.

But here a difficulty confronts the Anglo-Saxon. He is too apt, in drawing his conclusions upon current events in Russia, to judge of the people by his own standard, to mentally transport them to London or New York, instead of imagining them in Moscow or Warsaw, influenced by a crowd of local circumstances and by centuries of local history. He is too apt to think of them as Anglo-Saxons in red shirts, or as

Englishmen speaking Polish. And though he has the opportunity of observing the Jewish people from near, he again commits the same error, imagining the English or American Jew removed to the Russian Empire and acting there as he acts in London or New York. He forgets the vast differences of atmosphere, of history, of treatment and environment. He forgets that the Polish or Russian Jew in his relationship to the Sclav differs from the English or American Jew in his relationship to the Anglo-Saxon, as the Sclavonic temperament differs from the Anglo-Saxon temperament, or the histories of Russia and Poland from the histories of England and the United States. He reads with horror of Jewish massacres and of Jewish persecution; learns with indignation that the Jews are only permitted to inhabit certain quarters of Russian cities and certain cities of the Empire. But has he seen the Jews placed under these restrictions? Has he had an opportunity of observing the methods of the Polish Jews who, living freely amongst a nation in the proportion of one in seven, have attained an influence in the proportion of seven to one? Has he seen the other side of the medal and counted the cases in which the Semite takes advantage of the Sclav and the Jew rules the Russian? Has he seen provincial towns solely inhabited by Jews who live upon the surrounding peasantry? Has he seen country estates in which Jews act as middlemen between the proprietor and those who purchase his grain, his potatoes, his horses and cows—nay, his milk and butter?

Can he imagine the capital of Poland, the most civilised city in Russia, the link between Europe and Asia, where every third man is a Jew, where the trade and commerce are in the hands of Jews and where Jewish organisations have openly declared their intention of converting the Imperial army to the tenets of Socialism and of gaining the greatest amount of political influence, when the crisis of crises, the fall of absolutism shall throw the Empire into chaos? And yet these things are facts, and, what is of more importance to the Anglo-Saxon peoples, these facts may, though in a modified form, spring up amongst them. It is true that the mysterious influence and the long unheeded danger of Semite tenacity has been greatly augmented by Sclavonic indolence, by the patience of the one race and the unstableness of the other; that alarmist theories are easily concocted when no nation welcomes the advent of the pauper alien, and England, proud of her supremacy, has grown idle and careless in prosperity. But is it not possible that this very indifference may help to develop the alien pauper question into a problem? Although there are a hundred reasons why the Jewish people should not attain the ascendency in the West they have attained in the East, that strange deceptive ascendency which looks like persecution at first sight; although the reader may not, and probably does not, believe that in very truth the sons of Israel are the chosen people who shall one day inherit the earth; although there are as yet no grounds for supposing that one third of the population of

London, Leeds, Manchester, New York or Sydney, will shortly be composed of the Hebrew element; although neither Great Britain nor the United States have reason to fear being "swamped" by the Semitic race, yet it is not improbable that even the supreme Anglo-Saxon would profit by observing the methods, customs and character of that wonderful people whom no amount of oppression, persecution or injustice has been able to conquer. That silent defenceless army, though always defeated, never loses, never flinches nor turns back, no matter how strong the fortress or how large the garrison arrayed against it. Always suffering, it is ever victorious; physically cowardly, it never flinches; but, gathering up its scattered forces, stands shoulder to shoulder and man to man, vanquished by all, yet seeing all its conquerors, proud kingdoms and mighty empires though they be, crumble into forgotten dust, whilst it rises once more with eternal suffering and untiring patience, with a mixture of fear and valour, humility and arrogance, to confront younger nations with its insoluble problem. For these reasons I have ventured to place before the reader a few facts relating to the Polish Jew—facts gathered at first hand and proved, whenever circumstances would permit, on the spot; facts which are for the most part of daily, even hourly occurrence, and which I have endeavoured to surround with as much local colouring as will enable him to see them in their natural light.

TABLE A.—COMPARATIVE POPULATION OF JEWS IN POLAND

GOVERNMENT OF	TOTAL POPULATION	JEWISH POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF JEWS
Warsaw	1,931,168	349,943	18·12
Kalisz	842,398	72,339	8·59
Kielce	761,689	82,427	10·82
Lomza	579,300	90,912	15·69
Lublin	1,159,273	153,728	13·26
Piotrkoff	1,404,031	222,299	15·83
Plock	553,094	50,473	9·13
Radom	815,062	113,277	13·89
Suwalki	582,696	58,808	10·09
Siedlec	772,388	122,370	15·84
Total	9,401,097	1,316,576	14·01

POPULATION.

From Table A it will be seen that the Jewish population is greatest in the governments of Warsaw and least in that of Kalisz. It diminishes in the following manner :—

GOVERNMENT	PERCENTAGE	GOVERNMENT	PERCENTAGE
Warsaw	18·12	Lublin	13·16
Siedlec	15·84	Kielce	10·82
Piotrkoff	15·83	Suwalki	10·09
Lomza	15·69	Plock	9·13
Radom	13·89	Kalisz	8·59

Taking the districts, we find that Warsaw (28·20%) and Lodz in the government of Piotrkoff (25·09%) have the largest Jewish population. In the remaining districts of these governments the Jewish percentage does not exceed 15, so that the greatest proportion is gathered in the two large centres—Warsaw and Lodz.

Taking the statistics for the town populations for the ten governments, we find that the percentage varies between 59 and 28·2, the government of Siedlec giving the greatest and that of Piotrkoff the least, thus :—

GOVERNMENT	POPULATION	GOVERNMENT	POPULATION
Siedlec	59·0	Kielce	47·7
Suwalki	56·3	Kalisz	42·9
Lomza	55·7	Lublin	38·9
Radom	54·7	Warsaw	38·8
Plock	49·1	Piotrkoff	28·2

It will be seen that the variation of these percentages falls into two natural groups, one following the Western governments on the left bank of the Vistula, the other, the Eastern on the right bank—that is to say, in the Western governments (Kielce, Kalisz, Warsaw and Piotrkoff) the Jewish town population is smaller than in the Eastern (Siedlec, Suwalki, Lomza and Plock). Of the two governments which fall away, Radom and Lublin, the former is to the west but has a larger Jewish population than Lublin; but this is the only exception.

By dividing the ten governments into Eastern and Western groups, we find the following proportions of general and Jewish populations for the towns and suburbs.

	GENERAL POPULATION	JEWISH POPULATION	%
Eastern Group	837,400	408,504	48·4.
Western Group	1,865,446	700,910	37·1.

In the Western group both the general and Jewish population are larger than in the Eastern, though the

percentage of the Jewish in the Eastern is larger than that in the Western. The Western governments are more densely populated, as they include the large industrial centres, whilst the Eastern governments are chiefly agricultural. This predominance of the Jewish element in the agricultural districts appears strange at first sight. One would think that the Jews, by virtue of their business propensities, are better adapted to the industrial centres. This supposition is strengthened by the fact of their large number in the districts of Warsaw and Lodz, the two chief industrial centres of the country. But the truth of the matter is that the average Jew earns a better living in the agricultural districts, not by tilling the soil but by disposing of its produce. Until the latter half of the 19th century Poland was *par excellence* an agricultural country, in which the Jews played the part of middlemen between the producer at home and the consumer abroad. Since the year 1863, however, Poland has gradually but steadily developed her industrial resources. Factories have replaced farms in many districts, and machinery imported from England and Germany abolished a great deal of manual labour. The Jews, deprived to a great extent of their old rôle of factor, have been forced to find other means of living. The lack of good Jewish schools, the restrictions imposed by Jewish ritual, the observance of Saturday as the Sabbath, their dislike for factory discipline, and their aptitude for commerce, are all reasons which prevent them from competing with the Poles in the

industrial world. Once, therefore, they cease to be factors or have not enough means to trade, they resort to the sweating shops and make cheap clothing or turn hawkers in the large towns. Those who happen to be born in agricultural districts can always eke out a living from the squires and peasants. This is why their numbers predominate in those governments which remain chiefly agricultural. Many thousands, unable to earn their bread in the towns, emigrate; their numbers are ever increasing, but the continual exodus does not succeed in decreasing the Jewish population. The average annual increase since 1890 for the whole Kingdom is 2%. But nowhere has it reached such proportions as in the governments of Piotrkoff and Warsaw, where it amounts to 81·1% and 68·2% respectively during the last seven years. These centres have been recouped by Jews from the rest of the Empire. Many so-called *Litvoki*, or Lithuanian Jews, have emigrated to Warsaw and other large centres; many more have come from Moscow and the Russian settlements. The Jewish massacres of 1905 and 1906 sent many to Poland. They cannot all earn a living there, some emigrate, others tax the resources of the Jewish community to the utmost. In fact, it is computed that 80% of the Jewish population belongs to the proletariat, a class which is suffering severely from the economic crisis. It is with these eighty per cent. that the following pages will chiefly deal, for its members fill the emigrant ships and crowd the slums of foreign

cities. Nevertheless the rest of the Jewish community demands brief comment.

The Jewish community in Poland falls into two unequal groups, the smaller one comprising those who have adopted Polish culture, the larger those who have not.

Group I

This group again subdivides into two broad classes, the Plutocracy and the *Intelligentia*. The Plutocracy need not detain us here, for its members are as cosmopolitan as those of the same class in other countries. Content to rule the finances of the land, it has as much interest in averting revolution and condemning anarchy as other wealthy classes. Its members are to be seen in the hotels of London, Paris and Monte-Carlo, as far removed in sympathies and sentiments from the children of the ghetto as the fashionable crowds they rub shoulders with. But they are never deaf to an appeal on behalf of their less fortunate co-religionists, and many a charitable institution in the Jewish quarters of Polish towns owes its existence to their bounty.

The Jewish *Intelligentia* is to be found among the ranks of the medical and legal professions to a large extent. As medical men they take a high place and are much respected by the community at large. The general practitioner is practically unknown in Poland; the Jewish doctors are therefore specialists. As such

they keep pace with the times, and being men of liberal education are able to keep *au courant* of the most recent researches and discoveries made by their colleagues in other countries.

As barristers they fill a large portion of the legal list in spite of the restrictions put upon them. Many of them have remunerative practices of a somewhat doubtful character and a few enjoy excellent reputations. But the majority of barristers in Poland, Jewish or Polish, lack that culture which is generally associated with members of the free professions in Western Europe. This lack is more strongly marked amongst the Jews. I know Jewish barristers who receive their clients in their shirt-sleeves in the summer, in a "study" from which the dust has not been removed for more days than a careful housekeeper would like to count. Their reception hours are in the afternoon, after the law courts are closed, and the barristers, eager for clients, appear in the doorway to see who is ringing. Sometimes the flats, dingy and ill-kept, which serve as office and home for the whole family, are literally crammed with furniture that a Bond Street dealer would envy. Old Italian chairs, Dantzig cupboards, and Empire tables which were new when Napoleon went to Warsaw vie in beauty with delicate pieces of china that Macolini himself painted; and yet all these things are crowded together and so dirty that the pleasure which their beauty would otherwise afford is marred by regret that they are neglected. And in the midst of all these

curios sits the *mecenas* (lawyer) himself, as ill-cared-for as his household gods, receiving his clients in their long *halats*. But these are the men, the Jewish lawyers of Warsaw and the provinces, who guide not only Jewish but much Polish thought to-day, for it is they who contribute to the greater part of the newspapers and magazines. The Jewish journalist is to be found everywhere. Not many years ago a Jew edited a well-known woman's paper with clerical tendencies. Not being very sure of the kind of sentiment which ought to prevail in such literature, he used to take the articles to a Roman Catholic priest before publishing them. The priest made whatever corrections were necessary, and the paper flourished until the Jew died and it fell into the hands of a Roman Catholic editor with liberal views. Its circulation rapidly went down.

The Jewish element is most influential in Socialistic and revolutionary literature, and, as we shall see later on, the members of the Jewish *Intelligentia* play an important part in political societies.

The Jewish *Intelligentia* have assimilated more or less with the Polish community. Many of them, even though they have ceased to attend the synagogue and are too intellectually developed to look upon the Rabbis with blind respect, would scorn the idea of embracing Christianity and despise those of their race who have done so. But they have left the ghetto far behind them: nay, they often speak of it with horror. They have exchanged its language for Polish, which they speak and

write as accurately as the Poles, although, as with Peter of old, their "speech betrays them." Those of them who are not Socialists are Polish patriots, looking upon the country as theirs, on its vicissitudes as their own. Such men, whose sons are in their first youth and converts to new ideas, look upon the Jewish Party [1] with antipathy.

It is no rare thing to-day to find these Jewish houses of the *Intelligentia* divided. The older generation is for assimilation, for making the Jew forget the ghetto and its language, whilst the younger deliberately sets itself the task of learning Yiddish in order to reach the Jewish proletariat. The fathers are for the old peaceful times, and the sons for strikes and disturbances. And yet it must not be supposed that either wishes to lose his Jewish individuality; each strives to assert it in his own way, each hopes by his own methods to raise the position of the Jews in the Russian Empire. When the women folk join in the struggle in which one member of the household is for assimilation with Socialism, another for assimilation without, a third for the Social Democrats, a fourth for Sionism and a fifth a leader of the Jewish Bund, the chaos is such as to cause the patriarchs of the family, bred in traditional solidarity, to hold up their hands in horror and ask what will happen next.

An idea of the extent to which the political revival has swept away the old ideas of solidarity among the Jews in Poland will be gathered from the following case which came before the Warsaw tribunal during the

[1] The Bund.

summer of 1906, and in which two Jews accused co-religionists of forcing them to join a revolutionary party.

According to evidence given at the trial, two young Jews, Wasserman and Grosman by name, went to the police with the following complaint. "As we were going along the Torgova at the Brudno (a suburb of Warsaw) several young Jews stopped us and began to persuade us to join the fighting section of a Socialistic Party. When we refused over and over again, the agitators would not let us go on, but threatened that if we were so obstinate we should pay for it with our lives. We went on in spite of these threats, and one of the agitators took out a stiletto and tried to stick it into Wasserman's chest, but Wasserman dodged him and escaped with a tear in his coat. Seeing this, the brother of the would-be assassin pulled a revolver out of a comrade's hand and fired at Wasserman, who escaped a second time, but the bullet hit Grosman in the neck." The two agitators were arrested and charged with attempting to murder Wasserman and Grosman. As it happened, both prisoners were released for want of sufficient evidence. But the interest of the case lies in the fact that Jews rarely bring their quarrels before a Russian tribunal, preferring to settle all their differences amongst themselves.

Quarrels of a more modified form are now of daily occurrence among the Jewish community. Time was when the Polish Jews spent their time arguing about the Talmud; politics have taken its place in modern Jewry.

The Jewish newspapers are full of articles directed against those whose views differ from their own. Half their columns are taken up with abusing their neighbours. The contributors of the Yiddish papers jeer at those who write in Polish, whilst the latter often treat the former with a scorn which might be called anti-Semite but for the fact that both parties are Jewish. Needless to say, these polemical feats are the work of the Jewish editors and journalists. But for the present let us turn to the class the *Intelligentia* is trying to influence, for whose popularity they are bidding, and upon whose support the hopes of more than one political party rest. For this purpose we must bend our steps towards the ghettoes of the Polish towns and visit the Jewish settlements scattered over the provinces.

Group II

(1) THE GHETTO

In Poland, when a man launches out into unwonted expenses, his friends ask him "Hast thou killed a Jew?" as if all the Jews were rich and their assassination meant a fortune for him who cared to take the spoils. The working classes have a fixed idea that the Jews, however poor they may appear, have great wealth stored up somewhere or other, and they cling to this illusion, in spite of the poverty of the ghetto, a poverty which exceeds anything the Polish masses experience.

And yet the first impression of the Jewish quarter is not so much poverty as the stifling atmosphere, the smell of garlic and of dirt which pervades the streets and seems to roll from the houses in waves. So strong is it, in the summer months especially, that it seems to be something tangible. In the winter, the cold suppresses it in the streets, only to coop it up in double strength in the rooms where six square feet afford sleeping, living and working accommodation for a dozen people, whose aversion to soap and water is proverbial and whose favourite food is herrings and garlic. And yet, at first sight, the ghetto of a large town will probably disappoint the stranger, especially if he happen to enter it by a large thoroughfare like the Nalevki in the Warsaw ghetto. Here the buildings are more defaced and the shops dingier than those in the Polish quarters. But here, as there, the fronts of the houses are covered, up to the second floor, with boards on which Russian and Polish words advertise the wares to be sold and the names of the merchants. True, the signs are more crudely painted than those in the rest of the town. Here a many-branched candlestick, painted yellow, announces that a silversmith works in the house; there cylindrical masses and round lumps, brown on a white ground, tell the would-be purchaser that Jewish bread is to be sold. A little higher up red, blue and green ostrich feathers, abnormally large and brilliant, announce a feather factory. But it is, with the exception of the candlestick, only what the stranger has seen in other parts of the

town, shabbier and shoddier, but the same. The names over the doors are not Sclavonic, for who ever heard of a Polish "Goldwater," "Mothermilk," or "Nut-tree," but they are written in Russian and Polish. No Hebrew signs are to be seen: even the announcement that the Jewish troupe will play in the Muranov theatre, stuck up on the walls of a corner house, is printed in Russian and Polish. The authorities, bent on suppressing all signs of Judaism even in its home, forbid the use of Yiddish for advertisements or announcements. And yet on nearer inspection, the streets are very characteristic. To begin with they are crowded, and the people who pass one another have nearly all the Jewish type. The men are dressed in the long *Halat*, or skirted coat which reaches nearly to the ankles, and the peaked cap, or *Jarmulka*. Some of the younger women have their hair plaited; others wear the hideous wigs of the married women[1] which can be seen like the trophies of some Indian chief, piled up in baskets in the market-place. Every degree of Hebrew beauty and ugliness is here: the stunted boys and girls, the offspring of diseased parents, reared in the poisonous atmosphere of the cellar and the *cheder;*[2] the maiden with lustrous eyes and rich dark colouring, such as Solomon must have had in his mind when he wrote, "Thou art all fair—there is no spot in thee;" young

[1] A Jewess on her marriage must shave her head and wear one of these wigs.

[2] Jewish elementary school.

men with Christ-like faces, others with mean ones; old men wrinkled and calculating, with eyes in which lust for money glints as hard as the golden idol; old women who look like witches invented to frighten naughty children; and the white-haired Rabbi who walks with a dignity which proves that he is a learned man and entitled to respect. They are all there. Even in the trams and cabs which pass, the Hebrew prevails. The Cossacks, sunburnt and frowning, are a contrast. They ride through the street, lining both sides of it, in single file, their small rough-coated horses shy at the tram-bells and rush, head in air, among the traffic. The riders, with the muskets in their hands, are ready to shoot at the first sign of an attack. Their linen blouses are nearer brown than white, their loose trousers and high boots shabby. They scowl at the people on the pavements and at the shops as if looking for an excuse to ride among them and plunder. These are the men who only need a sign from their superiors to run wild in Warsaw, plundering and massacring all who come their way; for not only is the inherent love of looting strong in them, but they are sick of patrol service which means long hours on duty and the risk of a bomb, yet has none of the joys of warfare, where a Cossack may plunder and no questions are asked. Give them the slightest excuse, fire off a revolver or throw a cracker, and they will avenge not only their comrades who have perished at the hands of the revolutionaries, but their own hands and backs stiff

from holding the musket, and aching with long service in the hot sun or the biting frost. The Jews know this, and though they scowl back at them or mutter a word in Yiddish, they give them a wide berth. Even the armed groups of the Bund, who assassinate policemen in broad daylight and think nothing of going up to a couple of sentries and shooting them where they stand, hesitate before attacking Cossacks, for they know that the odd hundred who line the street now would like a *pogrom* more than anything, and that the under officer who is with them could not hold them back, even if he would, once their eager eyes found an excuse for beginning a stampede. These savages of Orenburg inspire fear as well as hatred, and the Jew would be foolhardy indeed who provoked their rage. As to the rest of the crowd, those who have no political aspirations, and the shopkeepers who have wares to lose, they heave a sigh of relief when the Cossacks turn the corner and the last horse disappears from view, for the times are such that a slight incident leads to a panic, and then who knows if the massacres of Bialystok may not be repeated in Warsaw ?

Let us turn into one of the side streets. Here houses are dingier and the shops so small that they find enough room in the cellars. The Goya [1] does not buy things in this street, where the commerce is supported by the ghetto population. A lame boy is selling newspapers—you can buy the *Weg*, *Telegraf*, *Freind*, and half-a-

[1] Gentile.

dozen others, but they are all in Yiddish, and even if you have studied it in Western Europe, there will be many words you cannot understand, for it is the most plastic language in the world, and absorbs expressions peculiar to whatever country it happens to be in. This street is comparatively quiet. The windows of the houses are open. Here and there a man, cap on head, looks out into the street; ragged children, their heads and often their bodies teeming with vermin, play gravely. They all look old and wise; they all glance at the European intruder with undisguised aversion. A tram passes on its way to the cemetery which lies beyond the town. The roads are up—they always are in Warsaw—and the rails are so insecurely laid that the tram runs off them when it reaches a curve, and a murmur from the passengers expresses more disapproval than surprise. The driver and conductor descend with the look of men who "expected it," the passengers show no inclination to get out, and only do so when the driver points out the impossibility of getting the tram back so long as their weight is in it. A crowd of Jews have gathered round, but do not help, neither do the Jewish passengers. The conductor and driver do not expect their aid, and would not give their own if they saw a Jewish carter in the same predicament, unless their tram were inconvenienced by the delay. But the two sturdy Poles push the wheels back again, the passengers get in, the bell jangles loungers out of the way, the tram drives off, the crowd disappears and

silence reigns until the next tram, hurrying to make up for lost time, runs amuck on the same corner. Whenever I hear people in England talk about the fear with which the children of the ghetto look upon the Sclav, I think of a tram incident I saw once from my window in Warsaw, which looks out upon a street where a sharp turn causes the trams to derail whenever the wooden pavement wears down. One warm evening, almost every tram which passed had met with the same misfortune, and at last a large one drawn by two horses, skidded close to the kerbstone. The passengers got out, and as it was crowded, rushed back as soon as they could to their places. A Polish girl of about sixteen and a Jewish boy of about the same age disputed the possession of a few spare inches on the front bench. They both nudged and pommelled for some seconds, until the Jew, noticing the girl's smart hat—it was Sunday—found a way of getting his seat. He sprang at the hat, the girl made an unsuccessful dash at his cap; the boy, pushing back her hat, first made a bird's-nest of her hair, then crushed the "creation" between his hands. The other passengers were too busy getting their places to notice the incident; the girl, discomfited, got off the tram, and the Jew set his cap straight and folded his arms with the air of a Napoleon who had conquered Europe.

Let us turn into a busier street, where the sounds of bartering are to be heard. This woman sitting on the pavement with a basket of fish is what the Poles call a

Kupcova, or female hawker. Her wares look as unsavoury as she does, but two or three Jewesses are bargaining with her, one holding a fish up in dirty hands and asking how she could think anybody was so stupid as to pay such a fabulous price for it. Everything in this street looks unwholesome, the people, the shops and the wares. There are no trams, but cars driven by Jews make a noise which forces the passers-by to shout if they want to be heard. Nobody laughs, even the children do not smile; everybody looks patient or angry, but not gay. There is a total absence of street humour, and though all are busy and intent on their work, nobody hurries. The languor, not of cities, but of the ghetto, is upon them, and it shows in their gait as well as in their faces. Here and there a prosperous tradesman in alpaca *halat* and velvet cap is to be seen. His mind is full of his business—he has a bill or two due to-day. That thin man, who is in as near an approach to a hurry as the ghetto can show, is a factor. His Polish client wants money—the interest will be good and the Jew is bent on raising the loan by hook or by crook before nightfall. This youth, with his serge jacket and soft hat is an agitator, on his way to a meeting at one of the factories. He has discarded the *halat* and the peaked cap, but he talks Yiddish fluently and is a good speaker. Now he is pondering over what he shall say to the men. The girl who walks by him is bent on the same errand. Two years ago they were both working in a factory for a pittance.

Now the "Party" pays them a fixed sum for propaganda work. The girl is, if anything, a better orator than her companion, but he has the pull with the pen, which he wields in the Yiddish papers exposed for sale hard by. Neither of them is twenty-one. Those two lads hanging round the bread shop are out of work. They make cigarettes when they can, but the trade is bad and their factory closed for three days in the week. They talk to each other at intervals, but most of their time passes in spitting on the pavement. This man who comes out of the shop leading a small child by the hand is a beggar. His kind has increased during the last two years, but I doubt if his plea is ever refused. The Jews do not let their poor beg outside the ghetto; they provide for their needs within its bounds. That grey-bearded man is a Jew of the old school. His race is dying out, for his children have taken to politics and mix with the world in a way which horrifies him. He has nothing in common with new Jewry. He lives in the Talmudistic atmosphere which still pervades certain parts of the ghetto and reigns in many of the provincial settlements. He has no work, that is to say he does not make boots or clothes, mend fur, or roll cigarettes. He is poorer than such men, his wife supports him by the proceeds of a basket which holds cherries, apples or oranges according to the season, and reposes with the remains of the fruit, under the family bed at night. But even to-day, when the Bund has swept away many traditions and the Talmud is not held in such reverence as of yore,

this learned Jew holds a high place in the ghetto. Nobody hates the *goya* like he, and he would rather suffer hunger than learn to speak Polish. He will ponder for weeks over a passage in the Talmud or a verse in the law, and sit poring over the scriptures long after his family has gone to rest, till the dawn breaks through the window. He knows and cares nothing for the outer world. Even ghetto life does not interest him. He lives with the law and the prophets. Moses is more real to him than the city magistrates and King Solomon than the Tsar to whom he owes allegiance. His great grief is the fact that his eldest boy whom he had destined for a "wise man" has joined the Social-Sionists. But he has his moments of triumph. When a Rabbi comes and consults him about some passage which troubles him, and he answers, finger upon the sentence in question, whilst the neighbours, attracted by the distinguished visitor, listen open-mouthed or gasp "*ai-waj*" ("oh my!"), there is no prouder man in the Russian Empire than this Jew, in his ragged *halat* and lice-infested cap.

Let us go into that cellar where six men and boys are busy at a table on which leather is scattered. The room is so full, what with the cobblers, the furniture, the master's wife and the children, that we can scarcely grope our way across it. Nobody takes any notice of us but the master, who raises his head and asks us something in Yiddish. His looks are not friendly. No, he cannot make you any boots—he's too busy. He answers

in bad German, and, as if to explain the fact, he goes on with his work. Feeling snubbed, you have scarcely time to glance round the dirty room before leaving it. The chief articles of furniture are the red feather beds. All the men and the boys sit in their caps, as pious Jews should, and the little children are taught to keep theirs on. The wife, who is busy by the stove, makes some remarks in Yiddish to her husband, and you feel that it is directed against yourself. Several of the children cough. Little wonder, cooped up in such air, without a park or square to play in. Let us leave them. They will work till late at night, when they stream into the streets to breathe what little air there is. In summer the thoroughfares of the ghetto are crowded from night-fall till the early hours of the morning. One wonders the people do not go to sleep after the long day's work until one remembers the rooms, the beds, the vermin and the crowds of children. But let us go to the market. Our way lies through the same shabby streets, knocking against the same people. Sometimes an incident relieves the monotony of the scene, but it is not often. A large empty cart driven by Jews passes us and pulls up at the corner. Two soldiers, who have evidently been having a lift, rise from its depths. Both of them are drunk—one very much so. They want the Jews to go in one direction, the Jews have business in another. The more sober one tries to persuade his comrade to get out, but the cart is comfortable and the comrade fails to see the point—he is of the opinion that Jews were

meant to take ordinary people where they want to go. He lies down again. The Jews in front of the cart feel uncomfortable and huddle up together. The more sober soldier summons all his energy and tries to pull his comrade out. The comrade objects, and is pulled by the legs—until he reaches the edge of the cart, when he gets a push which throws him under the horses. But the providence which watches over his kind allows him to be dragged out. The Jews look more frightened than ever, for the soldier, feeling aggrieved, draws his sword. But his comrade persuades him to put it back in its sheath, which he does after describing circles in his efforts to find it. No sooner is he clear of the cart than the Jews, whipping up their horses, make off as hard as they can, glad to get out of their dilemma so easily. The soldiers lurch on until they meet an officer, when they grow sober as if by magic, salute, and after he has passed, roll into a cab.

The military are much in evidence in this part of the town. Here a guard of four are taking a man and a woman to the police station. A crowd of Jews follows them. But they too disappear from view, and a few minutes' walking brings us to the market.

The halls are crowded with the Jewish hawkers, who sell everything, from meat for soup to vanilla for flavouring the ices. Their cries rend the air as they walk up and down between the booths, touting for customers and calling upon the "pretty lady" and the "Diamond lady" to buy. Indeed, in this babel it seems as if

everything is to be had for the bargaining which is carried on with Eastern zest and indulged in as a sport in which both sides are prepared to give and take. To the uneducated foreigner it is bedlam. All races are here. There is the stolid Moscovite soldier with his market basket and bicycle buying the dinner for his master. There is the Circassian with his lissome figure and silver *kinjal*. Here is the elegant Polish woman, who, alarmed at the cook's bills, has come to see the prices for herself and perhaps to drive a bargain over some lace or ribbon for which she would pay three times as much in the Polish shops. There is the practical Frenchwoman, owner of some *atelier*, doing her own marketing, basket on arm. There is the working man's wife, buying a few cucumbers or a loaf of bread and looking wistfully at dainties she cannot afford. There is the *chlop* [1] from the country, dazed but economical, bargaining for a pair of boots for himself or a gaudy kerchief for his *baba*.[2] There are the cooks, male and female, now exchanging the gossip of the hour, now chaffing a Jewish *kupcova* about the quality of her asparagus or the price of her strawberries. They are all here, Pole, Tartar, Moscovite, Frank and Hebrew, all talking at once, haggling, screaming, laughing and swearing. There is something for everybody:—things that can be bought in every European market and things which seem strange to Western eyes. Wigs for the Jewish bride are piled on one basket; veils for the Polish one hang hard by.

[1] Peasant.

[2] Old woman.

Clothes, fish, fruit and meat are all jumbled up together, whilst above the noise is the Hebrew's jargon and the smell of garlic and herring which his soul loves. Here are gathered all the force and wonder of the ghetto, the booths and stalls which feed the whole town and clothe four-fifths of it. Here are the garments made in the sweating shops and the produce of country farms, brought hither by the Jew who dances attendance upon the squire and runs his wife's errands. Here are merchants who haggle among themselves in one language and with their customers in another. Here are the people who have another creed and another hope, whom a thousand years have not changed nor brought nearer to those they barter with, who hold the trade of the country in the hollow of their hands, and who mock by every word and act those who dream of assimilating the Jewish masses. In the provincial settlements their lives are somewhat different.

(2) THE JEWISH SETTLEMENT

A short journey on the Vistula Railway takes the traveller from Warsaw past the fortress of Novo Georvievsk and to the station of Nasielsk. The town is three versts away, and the road runs through an uninteresting country, bare and ill-cultivated, with a few pine-woods scattered here and there. The town stands on a slight incline, only called a hill in this flat district, and the church, a good specimen of what is called

"Vistula Gothic," is visible from the railway. But one wonders why it is there as soon as the town is reached, for the population seems to be chiefly Jewish, as indeed it is, for out of a total population of 5,486, 3,882 are Hebrew. A synagogue adorns the Square which is paved with cobbles, crowded with children, and surrounded by wooden and plaster huts in various stages of dilapidation. There are other towns in which the Jewish element predominates to a still greater extent, in which they form 80%, 85% and even 90% of the total population; but there, it is obliged to take to less congenial tasks, because it cannot live on the Polish element. In Nasielsk the Jews are seen as they could be seen a hundred years ago all over the country, before the rise of industrial undertakings took the place of agriculture. Nasielsk existed when William of Normandy conquered England, and when the *Zamek* (castle) was there, the Jews settled round it to buy and sell and make what they could out of the Polish magnate, who owned the town, the district and its inhabitants. To-day, there is not a trace of the *Zamek* left, the stock of the magnate has long since died out, but the descendants of the Jews who first settled there have increased and multiplied, plying the same trades and observing the same customs for ten centuries. They are to be seen at all times and seasons, lounging at their doors, or leaning out of their windows. On market days they repair to the corner of the Square where the long, narrow peasant-carts are drawn up. A few skinny horses, brought by their

owners from the neighbouring villages, stand together at one side. A few peasants and Jews discuss their qualities to those who choose to listen. There is almost as much noise here as in the Warsaw market, though there are fewer people. There are no soldiers, well-dressed women, or working men's wives; even the squireen, to be seen at all the bigger fairs, is conspicuous by his absence. The elements are reduced to peasant and Jew, and both buy or sell indiscriminately, although the latter seems to have the monopoly of the stalls containing boots and clothing. Here, the art of bargaining is brought to perfection, and for him who understands the language, there is plenty of amusement to be derived from the conversations. The peasant has a stolid way of repeating his opinion of the value of an article with a frankness and a primitive choice of words which is as startling as convincing. The Jew indulges in the metaphors of the East, translated into a nasal Polish which contrasts strangely with the other's pure, Mazovian accent.

That Jew who is haggling with the peasant-woman over a basket of butter will take it to Pultusk or Warsaw when he has concluded his bargain. She is asking a fair price for it, but he hopes to get it for half a farthing a pound cheaper, and if, by the end of the afternoon, she gives in, he will regret all the way home that he did not propose a whole farthing a pound less. He and the wife of his bosom will discuss it together, and probably she will reproach him for a noodle. So

far, however, the peasant does not mean to give in; she has the butter of the whole village to sell, the other women are harvesting on their own land, and she, too, fears reproaches if she sells it too cheap. The Jew sees this and walks away, to return to the attack later on, for he knows he has no rivals to-day: the woman leaves her basket in charge of her daughter and goes to the far end of the market to hear the price of fowls. The stout Jew in the velvet cap is a corn-factor, Perlmutter by name. His business lies chiefly with the manors around, and he has only strolled into the market to gather a fresh stock of gossip from the Jews who have driven in from Pultusk. Perlmutter is quite a personage in Nasielsk. He has one or two houses, and sent his son to America to escape military service. Mrs. Perlmutter, who is standing in a red wig on the step of the family mansion, a brick, double-fronted cottage one storey high, will tell you with tears in her eyes that her boy is a fine gentleman in America, "so fine that nobody would think he is a Jew." The man in the very ragged *halat*, who has just pulled up his cart in front of Mrs. Perlmutter, is on his way to the station with milk from a manor beyond the town. He is a factor of the poorer sort and a money-lender as well. He has espied a debtor among the group of peasants by the inn, and hastens to see if he cannot get some interest at least in kind. The debtor feels he has given enough interest already, and their voices, as they argue the question, add to the hubbub. So does

the diligence on its way to Pultusk, which the Hebrew youth greets with shrieks of delight and a few choice remarks to the driver, also a Jew, who set up a rival diligence—much to the wrath of Nasielsk, which hires out weird conveyances called *briczkas*. Nobody is busier than the Jewish *szynkarz* or pot-house keeper, who lives almost at the end of the Square. His vodka and sausages are in great request; so is his money, which he lends to his customers at real Hebrew interest. Inside, the emigration agent is talking to the peasants who are wanted for the harvests in Prussia. He promises them a speedy fortune if they will go, and many, tempted by the high wages, agree. They are immediately set upon by one or two who were unfortunate when they went last year, and all begin to quarrel at once. The Jew, seeing his prospects of commission vanish, gets most excited and begins to dance in his anxiety lest the two dissenters should persuade their friends to stay at home. Another agent, of the same race, is talking earnestly in Yiddish to a few Jews at the further end of the cottage. He is hunting for emigrants to America, can get them over the frontier without a passport, and makes a good thing out of it. He has a share in an office in Warsaw, and carries on a big business.

Nasielsk is the commercial centre of the district. Everything bought and sold there passes through the hands of Jews. The richer ones live on the squires and

the poorer on the peasants, who are rarely out of their debt. The poorest inhabitant in the settlement manages to make a living somehow or other, for if he have no money of his own he can go to the lending club, which is quite an institution in these settlements. The richer Jews in the town or village subscribe to it, and though often it does not contain more than a few roubles, it keeps many a Jew from starvation, and sometimes sets them on a commercial career. The treasurer is entrusted with the money, and Jankel or Icek, when burning to exploit a Polish village, and without the means of doing so, goes to him. If his case is considered deserving, he is given a rouble, or even less, to begin with, and told to repay it within a week. Jankel, or Icek, now a capitalist, starts on foot, or begs a lift from a luckier Jew, to the village he thinks will suit his purpose best. There, he goes among the peasants, telling them gossip, looking at their stock, and finding out which is most likely to be his debtor. If he finds that nobody will borrow from him, he will buy some butter or eggs and go elsewhere. But the chances are that some peasant will be glad to have the loan of the money for four or five days. The interest is either deducted at once or taken out in kind, that is, in butter, eggs, or some other trifle, which the Jew will sell elsewhere. With the money gained by the transaction, he buys more stock or puts it out on interest. It is very possible that by the end of the week he will be able to pay back what he took from the club,

and leave the original sum on renewed terms with the peasant, an alternative he prefers, because his interest is safe and his capital too. As soon as possible he will scheme to get a broken-down horse, which would be consigned to the knackers under any other government, from one of the villages. This he will ride until he can hire or bargain for a cart; once in possession of this stock in trade, he is a full-blown factor, with a career before him. Sometimes, though, he is unfortunate or stupid: he lets his small capital lie idle, or places it badly. The week ends and he cannot repay his loan. He is jeered at by his brethren as a fool, and has forfeited the right to draw any more roubles. He goes about with a long face, as befits a man who has fallen in the estimation of his kind, and racks his brains for some new scheme which will re-establish his reputation. He generally manages to succeed, for the Polish peasant is easy prey. Having very little ready money, though he is rarely in want, he hates to part with cash, and readily pays interest in kind without reflecting how much dearer it really costs him. And borrow he must from time to time, for he has taxes to pay, boots to buy, or other expenses, before the sale of the pig has brought him in sufficient money. When a misfortune comes, and the cow dies or falls sick, the Jew is at hand, and so it goes on till the peasant is perpetually in his debt and power.

He and his wife have no idea of the market value of

their dairy and farm produce, for the Jews rule the market and keep their secrets to themselves. In this way the inhabitants of Nasielsk and settlements like them manage to live. They produce nothing, and, so long as they can keep body and soul together by making small sums among the peasantry, will not touch manual labour, which they detest. They are perfectly happy going from village to village and driving small bargains there, and only take to work of another kind as a last resource.

On the whole, they are infinitely better off than their brethren in the large towns, that is, than the proletariat. First, they have congenial employment. Physically, they are stronger, for though their homes are as unsavoury as those of the ghettoes, they spend a large part of the day in the open air. Milk is cheap, and they can live better. Cases of consumption and of nervous diseases are not met with so frequently as in the towns. Their wives and children look almost as healthy as the peasants. Of course, when the rural population fails to support them, and they take to sweating, they are very sickly, but in settlements like Nasielsk the peasants are the sponges from which a living can be squeezed. The two elements live in peace, and when quarrelling takes place, it is generally among the Jews themselves, and in consequence of professional rivalry. The hostility of the larger towns is lacking in the agricultural centres, especially where the Socialist

agitator has not yet penetrated. The Jews bow low to the parish priests, tell them the news, buy or sell their cows, and lend them money.

In these districts the Jew is reputed honest, and a man of his word. His high interest surprises nobody —for is he not a born usurer? The convenience of having him shuts his debtors' eyes to his real cost; he robs with discrimination, and if a peasant is the victim of some daring imposture, the chances are ten to one that he has fallen a prey to a non-Jewish swindler.

Quite lately, Nasielsk itself was the scene of a trick, in which the priest was the victim, and an Armenian the impostor. The priest was noted for his bargaining propensities amongst the Jews for miles around, and an Armenian who happened to be passing through the town had heard of them too, and determined to make something out of the knowledge. He went to the priest, and, showing him a ducat, said he had a thousand like it which he had found in the Caucasus, and was willing to sell at a fair price. On being asked the price, he replied that the Jews in Nasielsk had offered a rouble apiece for them, but he was sure they were worth much more. The priest, seeing that the ducat was gold, promised to send it to Warsaw to be valued, and told the Armenian to call again in a week's time, and bring the rest of the ducats with him. The Armenian bowed, retired, and spent the interval in conversation

with the Jews of the neighbourhood. At the end of the week he presented himself to the priest, carrying a heavy pot, which he said was full of ducats. Meanwhile the priest had been to Warsaw with the ducat and found out that it was worth three roubles; but, thinking that an Armenian, fresh from the wilds of the Causasus, would not know as much as the Jews about the value of his treasure, told him it had been valued at two roubles, and that he—the priest—was willing to pay two thousand roubles for the whole lot.

The Armenian agreed, but politely hinted that he would like to be sure that the money was forthcoming before parting with his ducats.

"Of course I've got the money," the priest said indignantly, omitting to add that most of it had been given in his charge by confiding parishioners who were afraid of brigands and had full confidence in him. And in order to convince his visitor that he spoke the truth, he opened the desk where it was lying. It was at this moment that the Armenian, producing a revolver, told the purchaser to part with his money or his life, and swear he would not give the alarm within twenty-four hours. The frightened priest, feeling the cold metal of the revolver on his forehead, did as he was told. A few minutes later he was the poorer by four thousand roubles of other people's money, and the richer by one gold ducat, worth three roubles, and a pot full of stones from the Nasielsk market-place. He was too ashamed of the

whole thing to tell anybody about the mishap for a few days, when the wily Armenian had disappeared—perhaps to play the same trick upon another priest who loved a bargain.

As to the Jews, they enjoyed it better than anybody.

CHAPTER II

ECONOMICAL POSITION—RELATIONS WITH THE POLISH COMMUNITY

General Remarks.—As the members of the *Intelligentia* do not merit our special consideration because they do not emigrate; so the Jewish shopkeepers, a large and generally prosperous class, who can make a good living in Poland, need not detain us. Such people do not go to England and America, unless they are in political trouble. The skilled Jewish workman can also earn better wages in normal times; but at present the times are not normal, and the artisan of varying capacity, the member of the land-settlement, the factor, the sweater, the mill-hand, all find it necessary to emigrate nowadays, though the rank and file of those who do so are of the poorest class, incapable of attaining to the low standard which prevails in the industrial world in Poland. The condition of these men when at home will be found in this chapter.

Jewish Land Settlements have existed in Poland for many years. The constitution of 1779 accorded the Jews permission to settle on all crown lands in the

Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. In the year 1823 the Viceroy of Poland published an order to the effect that they might rent land for life. Several rich Jews took advantage of this concession to rent large farms and settle Jewish families upon them. By an Ukaze published in 1843 Jews were permitted to settle upon all lands belonging to the government. Those engaged in agricultural pursuits were exempted from military service for a certain term of years, according to the number of souls in the settlement; but no family was allowed to own more land than its members could cultivate by themselves, and the employment of hired labour, Jewish or non-Jewish, was forbidden. Between the years 1844 and 1861, 1,345 Jewish families, consisting of 8,927 souls, were engaged in land cultivation in the Kingdom of Poland.

According to the latest statistics, 2,809 Jewish families are now engaged in cultivating a total of 36,000 acres. The registered number of Jews following special agricultural pursuits, such as market-gardening, cow-keeping, etc., is only 4,198, or 30·2 per thousand of the total Jewish population. But, as a good deal of land is rented to them in defiance of the law, it is safe to assume that at least three times that number is so engaged. For the same reason the total amount of land in Jewish hands is about 40,500 acres. The position of the average Jewish agriculturist is not high. Many of them have little or no live stock, and the little they possess is poor in quality. As mere cultivators they are

not successful; it is only when they bring their produce into the market that they outstrip their Polish rivals.

Jewish Labour in the Sweating Shops, etc.— More than 10% of the Jewish population in Poland is engaged in tailoring, boot-making, stocking-knitting, and in the manufacture of toys, buttons, studs and artificial flowers. Nearly one half (48·5%) of this number is engaged in making shoddy boots, shoes and clothing, which not only find a market at local fairs, but are exported to the interior of Russia. Sometimes the tailors and tailoresses work in shops under a master, but as the master himself can seldom afford more than one room for the accommodation of his family, most of the work is taken home. They are badly paid, and by dint of working for sixteen hours per day, can rarely earn more than £25 a year. A master makes from £25–£30 yearly; in many districts as little as £15 or even less. For instance, 33% earn less than £25, 47% from £25–£30, and 20% over £30 per annum.

After the tailors, the boot-makers are the most numerous. As many as 18,731 Jews are engaged in this industry. This number includes 8,215 masters, 4,314 journeymen, and 4,639 apprentices. The town of Radom produces cheap ready-made boots to the annual value of £100,000. The goods are sent to all parts of the Russian Empire. A clever master boot-maker in Radom is able to earn as much as £50 a year. But taking the total number of masters in the trade, 52% earn

less than £25, 33% up to £30, and only 15% over that amount.

According to the report of the Jewish Colonisation Society, when Jewish tailors and boot-makers are employed in the larger shops they have the reputation for being bad workmen, and are engaged as assistants to the Polish hands, only executing that part of the work which requires a minimum of care and technical knowledge. The guardians of the Society for supplying the Poor with Work in Warsaw strongly endorses this opinion.

The manufacture of shoddy underclothing employs 5,256 Jewish hands, only 572 of whom are men. The chief centres of this industry are in the governments of Radom and Lublin. A mistress seamstress has as many as four workers under her, whereas a master tailor rarely gives employment to more than three men.

Machine-made embroidery gives employment to a large number of Jewesses in the town of Radom. A mistress earns from 16*s.* to 24*s.* weekly, an assistant from 4*s.* to 6*s.* No men are employed. Jews are chiefly engaged in the stocking industry. A good master sometimes earns as much as £75 a year. The government of Warsaw annually supplies £8,000 worth of stockings to the capital.

The manufacture of other articles of clothing gives employment to very few Jews, but the bristle industry is entirely in their hands. The work is badly paid, and those engaged in it live in the most abject poverty. A Jew can earn as much as £20 per year.

In Russia, where Christian competition is not so keen and there are fewer metal factories, many Jewish blacksmiths are to be found; but this is not the case in Poland. Generally speaking, the highest percentage of Jews engaged in metal industries is to be found among the copper workers, who form 2·5% of the Jewish artisan population. Locksmiths only form 0·9%.

Chemical workers, soap-boilers, engravers and photographers form less than one per cent. of the Jewish artisan population. House-painters, glaziers and bookbinders amount to a little more than 1%. Only 580 Jews are employed in the glove trade.

With the exception of the bristle-makers, the people mentioned above work for fairs and bespoken orders. All their chances of gain are therefore in the proximity of the market-towns. When Jewish settlements are within easy reach of several, the inhabitants are in a flourishing condition; when they are at a long distance from them, the inhabitants earn the best living they can by running errands for the neighbouring *dvori* (manor houses) and lending money to the peasants. The professional knowledge of these artisans is very small: their work is of the poorest quality, unable to compete in any other markets than those of Russia and Poland. The Jewish Colonisation Society has done much good in bringing this fact before the eyes of the better-to-do Jews, and forcing them to realise the urgent need of establishing industrial schools if the Jewish artisan is to hold his own; this commission affirms that, with the

increase of machine-made boots, etc., the demand for Jewish labour has diminished.

Many Jews engaged in tailoring are hampered because they cannot get credit when buying their materials, and often a settlement is obliged to refuse orders from some Russian agent because their workers have not the wherewithal to buy stuff, and the mills will not trust them sufficiently to give them it except in return for cash.

As a rule these men and women, like their brethren in north-western Russia, seize the first opportunity of giving up crafts to engage in commerce or money-lending. Others, as we shall see, rent the gardens of the smaller landed proprietors, sell the produce in the nearest towns, and live through the winter on the profits of the transaction.

In the government of Lublin, where towns are far apart and the railway has not yet penetrated in many districts, the lot of the Jewish artisans is harder than elsewhere. There is little demand for their wares, as the peasants of that government weave and make their own clothing, disdaining to exchange their national and picturesque dress for shoddy clothes made after German patterns. They make everything for themselves but their boots, and the Jewish boot-maker of Lublin, by working sixteen hours a day and sending his wife to the fairs to dispose of his goods, can only manage to make both ends meet in the winter. In the summer he turns gardener or cow-keeper. Even money-lending is less profitable in this government than anywhere else. The

peasantry are prosperous and independent. They have not been demoralised, like those in the frontier districts, by European luxuries, and are therefore satisfied to live on the soil, which is of excellent quality, and to cling to the primitive customs of their ancestors. In the winter the men and women weave, spin and embroider, selling the flax and wool they do not want to the Jewish factors.

Toys for the Polish and Russian markets are made by the Jews in the historical city of Czenstochova. The trade brings this town alone as much as £10,000 annually. The industry was founded by a local Jew, who now sends his wares all over the Russian Empire. Most of them are made in tumble-down shops and hovels under the most primitive conditions. Both girls and men are employed, the girls earning from 1*s.* 7*d.* to 3*s.*, and the men from 8*s.* to 10*s.* weekly.

These toys, which include children's musical instruments, are copies of cheap German articles. Great solidarity exists among the different toy-makers. None of them will put a new pattern into the market until their colleagues have had an opportunity of copying it. The low price of their goods ensures them a ready sale, though, like all work produced by the Polish Jew, they are unable to compete with those of foreign manufacture. Formerly, the Jews of Czenstochova made the medallion-copies of the famous picture of the Virgin Mary—known as the Virgin Mother of Czenstochova, which hangs in the cathedral and is visited yearly by hundreds of

thousands of pilgrims from all parts of Poland as well as from Galicia; but they have now been forbidden to engage in this industry. The Jews of Czenstochova are also employed in making fancy buttons, studs, hat-pins, etc., which are sold throughout the Empire as "Nouveautés de Paris." This work is fairly well paid.

Jewish Labour in Factories and Mills: General Remarks.—The non-Jewish factories and mills in the Kingdom of Poland are, with few exceptions, larger than those financed by Jewish capital. There are no reliable statistics available for the whole of Poland, but those for the government of Warsaw show an average annual turnover of 8,213 roubles for 113 Jewish factories, and 115,987 roubles for 256 non-Jewish factories.

Jews are not employed in chemical works except as packers and sweepers. Their ignorance of the process of varnishing seems to exclude them even from those furniture factories which are in Jewish hands, and which turn out an enormous quantity of old furniture sold by Jewish dealers at high prices to uninitiated amateurs. They are also often excluded from the bronze and lamp factories because they do not know how to draw and are too weak for the heavy part of the work. They are employed in metallurgical works in such branches as do not require any special knowledge.

According to the evidences of the Jewish Colonisation Society, in factories and mills owned by Jews, when the installation of up-to-date machinery demands care and a certain amount of technical knowledge, Jews are not em-

ployed as engineers or machinists. In mills and factories where motors have not been installed and manual labour is still in demand, they are employed in large numbers both in the Jewish and non-Jewish establishments. Fewer Jewish factories are worked with motors than without. The average number of workmen employed in Jewish factories with motors is 71·5, and in non-Jewish factories 13·5.

The percentage of Jewish hands employed in Jewish factories with motors is 18·9, and in factories without motors 43·7. The number of Jewish hands employed in non-Jewish works is very small. In 311 non-Jewish factories and shops furnished with motors we find only 352 Jewish hands employed, and in 140 non-Jewish factories without motors there are 74 Jewish hands registered—that is, less than one Jewish workman per non-Jewish factory.

The following tables will illustrate these facts :—

	Non-Jewish Factories and Shops without Motors			Jewish Factories and Shops without Motors		
Government of	Number of Factories	Total Number of Hands Employed	Of these there are Jews	Number of Factories	Total Number of Hands Employed	Of these there are Jews
Warsaw . .	27	605	34	122	3,035	1,580
Kalisz . .	17	181	—	154	1,118	268
Kielce . .	5	74	—	61	1,025	101
Lomza . .	1	9	8	39	276	239
Lublin . .	29	410	23	158	1,750	1,122
Piotrkoff . .	32	944	2	121	3,861	1,394
Plock . . .	4	9	—	114	600	245
Radom . .	13	1,647	2	116	1,429	280
Suwalki . .	7	47	—	90	1,673	1,072
Siedlec . .	5	28	5	55	662	417
Total .	140	3,954	74	1,030	15,429	6,718

	Non-Jewish Factories and Shops with Motors			Jewish Factories and Shops with Motors		
Government of	Number of factories	Total number of hands employed	Of these there are Jews	Number of factories	Total number of hands employed	Of these there are Jews
Warsaw . .	45	9,874	100	72	7,026	2,467
Kalisz . .	20	1,561	8	25	1,282	394
Kielce . .	14	24	1	17	683	62
Lomza . .	2	46	3	22	469	189
Lublin . .	36	874	37	21	245	207
Piotrkoft. .	151	27,955	153	166	16,147	1,570
Plock. . .	8	102	—	7	81	1
Radom . .	16	1,088	16	20	778	107
Suwalki . .	5	35	5	19	266	119
Siedlec . .	14	412	29	17	605	120
Total .	311	41,971	352	386	27,582	5,236

The reason given by the Jewish Colonisation Society for the fact that Jews are not so frequently employed in mills with motors as in those without, is that they are too ignorant of the technical part of the work. But many employers of labour in the large mills and factories speak most highly of the Jewish workmen and workwomen, and say that it is only their socialistic tendencies which prevent their being employed in large numbers, and that the only complaint they have to make is that they introduce a revolutionary element into the mills. The following notes will enable the reader to draw his own conclusions.

Cotton-spinning.—Chiefly carried on in Lodz, which is called the "Manchester of Poland," has hitherto enabled that country to rule the market in Russia and the Far East. The strikes, which have been continual since the beginning of the year 1905, have caused much

of the trade to go to Moscow and other Russian centres, which used to be unable to compete with it.

According to the latest statistics, Jewish capital is represented in 40% of the cotton mills in Poland. One of, if not the largest establishment of the kind, is the property of a Jewish family (Messrs. Poznanski and Son). Their mills are said to produce goods to the annual value of 12 millions of roubles, and give employment to over 6,000 hands. Few Jews are employed, and the reason given by one of the firm when asked why he did not patronise his co-religionists was that he did not want to have 6,000 partners.

The woollen industry is almost entirely financed by Jewish capital, though Jews are chiefly employed as weavers. There are 1,625 Jewish weaver shops in the district of Pabianice (near Lodz) alone. Many so-called manufacturers have no mills of their own, but give work to these weavers, who execute it at home, earning from 12*s.* to 14*s.* per week. All the small towns and Jewish settlements in the neighbourhood of Lodz are inhabited by Jewish weavers, who work at home—generally without employing assistants. In general, the Jews prefer home work. This is because they dislike factory discipline and prefer to work under much harder conditions at home rather than submit to it.

In the town of Zdunska Vola, not far from Lodz, there are 80 hand-weavers, of whom 64 are Jews, who earn a living by doing work for the "Distribution Offices." The head of such an office, who is paid accord-

ing to the amount of stuff he can procure, gives out yarn to the weavers, together with patterns. Sometimes one of these offices will give employment to a hundred, a hundred and fifty, and even two hundred and fifty hand looms at a time. The observance of the Jewish Sabbath also deters capitalists from employing the Jews in the factories. The Colonisation Society, which makes a point of sending delegates to the factories and mills either financed or worked by Jews, takes a very gloomy view of the Jewish workman, and complains that whereas the Polish workman has made much progress under the guidance of foreign masters, the Jew remains in the same place as he was five and twenty years ago. Many Jews complain that German and Polish masters will not employ them because of Anti-Semitism, even when they are better than their Polish rivals.

One large mill, in which light woollen goods are made, and which is owned by a Jew, only employs Jews and is closed on Saturdays. Other Jewish and German owners say that the Jewish workman is so much more intelligent and learns so much better than the Pole, that they will employ him in spite of the Sabbath observance obstacle. On the other hand, there is one large mill in Poland, financed by Jews, where their co-religionists are only employed for manual labour, although the masters and foremen are Jews.

Many Jewish manufacturers who use hand-looms refuse to employ Jewish labour for economical reasons. The Polish workman takes lower wages, he does not

demand pay for his children's education, as they receive it free of cost, his wife adds to the family income, and both of them work on Saturday. The Jewish hand needs money for the *cheder* (elementary school), his wife does not work, and he himself only goes to the mill five times a week, for it is shut on Sundays and he observes the Sabbath. A Polish hand can therefore manage to support himself and family upon 8*s*. per week, whilst the Jew needs from 12*s*. to 14*s*., and supplements his wages by selling fruit in the streets after working hours, keeping a little unsavoury shop in his room, and lending money to his Polish comrades.

Metallurgical works, which come after the textiles in importance, employ few Jews. Messrs. S. and K., metal workers in Warsaw, are Jews. They employ 135 hands, of which 110 are Jews (95 men and 15 women.) The machinists are Poles with one exception. The Jews work as journeymen; neither the specialists nor masters are Jews. The owners of the works say that their Jewish hands have no technical knowledge of their work because the large establishments owned by Christians, the only places where they could learn the trade, refuse to employ Jewish labour. The works are open on Saturdays and Sundays. A few years ago Jewish masters were employed, but Messrs. S. and K. replaced them by Poles, because the Jews worked only four and a half days weekly, and demanded pay for the whole week. They naturally did not work on Saturdays; on Sundays it is the time-honoured custom of the masters

to take a holiday, and they left much sooner than the other employés on Fridays.

At another Jewish works, where the manufacture of boilers for sugar refineries is a speciality, 325 men are employed, 125 of whom are Jews. The master, a Jew, says that his co-religionists are clever copper workers, and as such often find employment in non-Jewish factories. When questioned about the Jewish men under him, he said that they had three grave faults—they shirked their work, interfered with things which did not concern them, and were too indifferent or conceited to compete with better workmen.

The metal-plate works employ Jews for manual labour only; they are excluded from all work in connection with the machinery. Mr. E., lamp manufacturer at Warsaw, a Jew, employs 200 men, of whom 100 are Jews. This gentleman said he was not satisfied with his Jewish hands, who were too ignorant to varnish and physically unfit for the heavier work. He affirms that the Jews not only know nothing about this industry, but are too self-satisfied to learn. For this reason they earn much lower wages than the Polish hands. The Jews employed by him are nearly all unable to read or write Polish, or to draw—a defect in their education which places them at a great disadvantage. The Polish workmen earn from 32*s.* to 50*s.* weekly, the Jewish from 20*s.* to 22*s.* No Jews are employed in the cast-iron section of the works.

Messrs. F. and M. (Jews) own a metal works at Warsaw

which gives employment to 110 hands, of whom 70 are Jews. The verdict given by the owners is that the Jews are less accurate than the Poles, and work better when paid by the piece. Here they work in their caps, and pray at intervals during the day. The varnishers in these works are all Jews, and very poorly paid.

One Jewish furniture manufacturer said he did not employ his co-religionists for varnishing and polishing because they do not know their work sufficiently well. They are employed in other parts of the factory.

In the *cigarette and cardboard-box* trade we find a demand for Jewish labour. The cardboard-box makers in Warsaw are all Jews. They have organised a kind of guild with which a savings bank is connected. Lectures are delivered in Yiddish two or three times a week. A Jewish cigarette-maker works much quicker than a Pole, turning out 2,000 pieces to the others' 1,500. The Jews generally work at separate tables but in the same room. They are paid from $8\frac{1}{2}d.$ to 1*s.* per 1,000. The paper sheaths are made by the women and children and filled by the men. Sheath-makers are paid about 1*s.* to 1*s.* 3*d.* per 1000, earning from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.* weekly. Many of these factories, though owned by Poles, are closed on Saturdays as well as Sundays.

The *tobacco factories* employ Jews almost exclusively. One of the largest firms of the kind, The Brothers Polakievitch, employs 650 Jewish hands, including 358 women. The cigar factories only employ Jews to make the cheaper sorts of cigars. The reason given is that

the Jewish workmen are slipshod, and often spoil the goods. The good Jewish workmen leave Poland to go abroad, where they can earn higher wages.

The manufacturers of *cheap neckties* almost entirely engage Jewish labour. Girls and women take the work home. The forewomen who distribute the work earn about 16*s.* a week; the others considerably less. They are paid by the dozen.

The *straw-hat industry* is almost entirely in Jewish hands. The work is precarious and badly paid, the season short. The Jews employed in the summer do not make the winter hats, as they are not sufficiently strong to press the felt and beaver shapes.

This industry, owing to the strikes and foreign competition, has greatly declined during the past two years. The hands are paid by the meter of straw. Thirty meters brings a girl in from $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ to 1*s.* 8*d.*

The manufacture of *artificial flowers*, which has developed by leaps and bounds at Warsaw of late years, gives employment to Jews and Poles, the Poles executing the more delicate part of the work, and the Jews making the foliage. Women can earn about 1*s.* a day, and men from 6*s.* to 20*s.* weekly, but the season is short and the trade precarious, especially since the strikes and disturbances have driven many good customers elsewhere.

In the *ready-made underlinen factories* at Warsaw 256 men are employed, of which number 193 are Jews. Poles are engaged to attend to the steam-motors, as

the Jews, by reason of their lack of sufficient physical strength and technical knowledge, cannot be entrusted with the work.

In all the factories and shops investigated—with one trivial exception—the Jews and Poles work side by side in perfect amity. The exception was due rather to political than racial reasons, as there were no Socialists amongst the Polish hands. In fact, politics, whereas they bring the representatives of rival parties to blows in many of the mills and shops, have served to bind the Jewish and Polish workmen closer together. One common cause has bound them, and that is Socialism. When a party of National Democrats springs up in a factory they have to confront not only the Jewish Bundists, but the Polish Socialists as well; and the adherents of the Bund, the Polish Socialists and the Social Democrats will join forces against the common enemy, no matter how lustily they fight over their own shades of political opinion at meetings.

Between these factory hands and the inevitable Jewish factor there are huge numbers of Jews in Poland who produce nothing, because they lack even the most primitive forms of technical knowledge, which condemns them to perform the heaviest tasks for the lowest possible wages. Such men become the hewers of wood and bearers of water, the porters, carters, raftsmen, hop-gatherers, and rag-sorters of the community. They form nearly twenty per cent (19·6) of the Jewish population, and as their lives are very miserable make good revolu-

tionary material. The advent of the long winter generally puts an end to their labours and to all means of earning the scanty fare which keeps their bodies and souls together. Jewish benevolence does what it can for them, but these poor wretches, whom a very average elementary education would place beyond fear of starvation, are a terrible weight upon their co-religionists.

This portion of the Jewish proletariat is in a far worse position than the class with which we must now deal, the class of middlemen and factors who live upon the Polish population, and, by reason of the Polish character, have become a regular institution not only in the towns but in every village and hamlet throughout the country. Sometimes they are wealthy, and dream of a brilliant career for their sons; sometimes they have no more capital than their mother-wit, which enables them to create a commercial monopoly in the villages they have chosen for their labours. Sometimes they only lend money to the peasants, sometimes their capital will allow them to supply the squires with it. But whatever class of the Polish community they may be useful to, they are always there, an inevitable feature of the Polish landscape, subservient, guttural, gesticulating, and useful.

The Polish Community and the Jews' Relations with it

Nine millions of the Polish population belong to the working classes, two millions being employed in factories and works, and seven millions on field labour. Of the last, three millions are entirely without land, and the majority of those peasants who have small holdings cannot support their families thereby. These holdings vary in size from a little over three to thirty acres. The well-to-do peasants possess as much as fifteen and even twenty acres, but the average amount is three, which with the cottage and live stock is worth about one thousand roubles.

Owing to heavy taxation and his inferior husbandry, it is as much as a peasant can do to support himself and family upon fifteen acres. Very many of them have therefore to send their children to work on the neighbouring manor. Failing such employment they temporarily emigrate to Germany and even to America, whence their savings are sent home, and are, if times are good, the means of augmenting the family acres. Very often the wife is left to till the land with the aid of a younger daughter whilst the men-folk emigrate for a few years.

Many of those who possess no holdings find employment on the manor lands, earning from 30 to 40 roubles annually in money. In kind they receive $35\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of corn, 71 bushels of potatoes, the use of 110

square yards of land for growing potatoes, the same amount for the cultivation of flax, which the women spin into coarse linen for shirts; 20 feet of wood or its equivalent in peat, and the right to keep one cow on the manor pasture.

If the *parobek*, as this farm labourer is called, has a son or daughter old enough to go to work, the earnings in money and kind are augmented to the value of 100 roubles yearly. Since the agrarian disorders, when strikes took place in many districts, some of the peasants have obtained better terms from the land-owners, including 40 roubles in money, an increased allowance of corn and potatoes, and the right to pasture two cows on the manor. But such conditions are exceptional, and the *parobek* rarely earns more than 35 roubles a year.

As it is impossible for all the peasant proletariat to find employment in the country, migration to the towns is constantly increasing. This did not matter so much when trade with the Far East, Poland's largest market, was in a flourishing condition, and good harvests kept the prices of food low; but this trade was paralysed as soon as the Russo-Japanese war broke out, and manufacturers were obliged to discharge many of their hands. The condition of the working classes was rendered still more deplorable in 1904 by the bad potato crop and an epidemic amongst pigs, which not only brought the rural population to the verge of starvation, but increased the cost of living for the urban proletariat,

whereas wages remained the same or were altogether lost in consequence of the industrial crisis.

These causes all tended to swell the ranks of the indigent and increase the influence of Socialism, a fact which did much to develop the activity of the Bund, as the reader will see later on.

The remainder of the Polish population consists of a small aristocracy, a large nobility and a rapidly increasing *Intelligentia*.

The aristocratical class is unpopular with the nobility and *Intelligentia* alike. This is partly owing to the rôle it played in the partition of Poland, and partly to its general cosmopolitanism. With the exception of the late Marquess Wielopolski, few members of the Polish aristocracy take any real interest in politics; but since the present political revival, which swept over the Russian Empire at the opening of the Russo-Japanese war, and affected Poland more than any other portion of it, most of them have joined the National Democrats, in order, their enemies affirm, to regain their long-lost popularity.

Practically every Pole who is not a peasant is a *szlachcic* (nobleman). He may be the proud possessor of two or three thousand ancestral acres, or he may eke out a beggarly existence by copying barristers' briefs; but, rich or poor, his nobility and his crest are the pride and the consolation of his life. Indeed, they often prevent him from working, even though his estate be so heavily mortgaged that it is to all intents and

purposes in the hands of the Jews; and if he does drift to the *Intelligentia* and engage in a profession, he considers it a point of honour to do as little as adverse circumstances will allow. He is in his element in the country, where the size of his estate varies from 180 to 1,500 acres, or, according to his reckoning, from six to fifty *włoki*. But the average size of the estate of a country *szlachcic* is about thirty *włoki*, valued at from three to five thousand roubles a *włoka*, but which, were it put into the market to-morrow, would not bring him a fourth part of this sum, so heavily is it mortgaged. The manor house or *dvor* is old, low-roofed, and generally built of wood. Sometimes it contains an upper storey, but as a rule all the rooms are on the ground floor, communicating with each other. Balconies, covered with roses and creepers, form the family lounge in summer, and fitted with double windows keep the cold out of the house in winter, when the rooms are heated by means of high white stoves. The lady of the manor passes her days in her dressing-gown, busied with her garden, home, and children. The lord, booted, collarless and unshaven, drives about his estate and converses with his Jewish factors, who bring him the news, do his business for him, and without whom he would not sell a bushel of corn or a quart of milk.

Far from town and post office, life flows easily in these *dvori*, where hospitality is unlimited, and Polish customs are clung to with a tenacity unknown in the cities. In politics the country *szlachcic* is a patriot,

and to-day he has thrown in his lot with the National Democrats.

As the superfluous peasant population helps to swell the ranks of the urban proletariat, so do the sons and daughters of the poorer landowners add to the ranks of the *Intelligentia.* Once members of this class and residing in Warsaw or some other large town, their patriotism is tinged with Socialism, even if they do not join the Social Democrats or become members of the Polish Socialistic Party. As students they do much propaganda work amongst the urban and rural proletariat, now an object of interest for patriot as well as Socialist; though the Socialists gained considerable influence over the working classes during those years when the country squire sadly pondered over the failure of the last rebellion. The *szlachcic* who leaves his patrimonial estate to seek a living in the towns can only become a lawyer, doctor, engineer, architect, clerk or tradesman, for owing to his nationality the civil service, a Russian monopoly, is closed to him, and his patriotism forbids him to serve in the Russian army in any other capacity but that of a conscript. But neither in the free professions nor in commerce does the Pole distinguish himself. He lacks that punctuality and power of attending to details which alone can insure success in any branch of work. His broad Sclavonic nature hates drudgery, and longs for change and amusement. As a professional man he is apt to ignore his reception hours or forget to attend to a case at the

proper time. As a merchant he treats his customers in an indifferent manner which indicates that he, as a *szlachcic*, pays them a great compliment in consenting to sell his wares at all. It is not that he is lacking in intelligence, far from it. His wit is equal, if not superior, to that of the average Anglo-Saxon. In spite of bad Russian schools and all the disadvantages of being ruled by a government whose culture is inferior to his own, he manages to cull a good all-round education, for, unlike the Englishman, who is too apt to think that what he does not happen to know is not worth knowing, he applies himself to the pursuit of a very catholic kind of knowledge, aided by good and cheap books. This lack of sterling business qualities is united with the want of what is best described by the word "grit" in the Sclavonic temperament, in its idle, easy-going good nature which will not make the effort to be at the office punctually in the morning or send work home within a week of the date for which it was promised. How far this trait has been developed by the presence of the ubiquitous Jew, ever ready to run an errand, perform a tiresome task or lend money, it is difficult to say, but it is there, and forms one of the reasons why the Pole, no matter how poor he is, can always give a Jew the wherewithal to buy his daily herring and garlic. Another reason lies in that desire of the shopkeepers and craftsmen to make their sons "gentlemen," to give them an university education and send them to swell the already overcrowded ranks of the free professions. This in-

satiable desire to mimic the *szlachcic*, and the inherent tendency of the Pole to avoid trades and crafts, has two effects. The first is to fill the Warsaw University and the higher schools with lads whose lives are a perpetual struggle to pay the fees and keep body and soul together by coaching small boys and girls; the second is the production of an army of incapable craftsmen, who are either too dull or too poor to dream of higher education, and too careless of their trades to try to excel in them.

What the Pole lacks in business capacity and moral courage the Jew possesses to an extraordinary degree. True, the ease, the grace, the charm of manner and of person are not his. His gait is awkward and his feet ungainly; no matter how fluently he speaks the language of his adopted land, his very accent betrays him. He brags and boasts, talks through his nose, talks against his race; is arrogant, self-opinionated, conceited and shy. When fortune smiles upon his strenuous efforts, and his money admits him to the society of the Polish *szlachcic*, he too often becomes a snob. But though he frequents their society, he is uneasy in it; for he knows he cuts but a sorry figure mounting a horse or handling a gun. But he is rich, and rich or poor, he is both of the least account and of the greatest power, for he has crept into every Polish household from the palace to the manor, from the farmhouse to the cabin. Nay, more than that. Were he to make a mark on all his hands have touched, not a field or

pasture, not a brick or stone, not even a beast of burden but would bear the trace of the despised son of Israel.

It is characteristic of the Polish nature that anti-Semitism does not prevent the Jew from earning a living in those very pursuits for which he is most detested. It is astonishing to find how many members of the aristocracy and richer nobility employ Jewish lawyers to superintend their affairs. They are, they affirm, excessively anti-Semitic, because they consider that the Jew is the cause of all the misfortunes Poland suffers, and especially of the anarchy which prevails. But they cannot take the trouble to put their affairs into the hands of a Pole because he worries them too much about formalities and will not get the business done in the time required, whereas a Jew does it all without any trouble and has a knowledge of the by-ways of the law which enables his client to sail close to the wind without running any real risk. "I can go to Monte Carlo with a quiet mind," the Pole will remark. "I know my case is in safe hands, and if he overcharges me, he does it in such a way that I never find it out." His wife, equally anti-Semitic, buys her laces and ribbons not at a Polish shop, but in the Jewish quarter, because the prices are lower. The average Pole is always in need of ready money, and generally pays dearly for it. Every Jew in Poland is more or less a money-lender, so the anti-Semites affirm; and though the statement is exaggerated, I doubt if any country is such a happy hunting-ground for the Hebrew usurer, from the rich Jew who

has bought a title from the proceeds of his usury to the ragged inhabitants of a Jewish settlement who borrow a rouble for a week to "speculate" with among the peasantry. The following incident, which is not only true, but one of many similar instances, will illustrate the happy-go-lucky way in which the Pole will burden himself with debt—

X——, a *szlachcic*, of course, and with nothing but his gambling propensities and his crest to live upon, needed 1,800 roubles. He sent for a Jew who happened to be possessed of that sum, and who agreed to lend it to him on condition that he paid five roubles interest daily and did not return the money for at least a year. X—— agreed, the money was counted out, and the debtor went to his club. On leaving it next morning he was accosted by the Jew, who bowed very low, enquired if the illustrious gentleman had had good luck, and asked for the five roubles. It was so every morning. No matter where X—— played, the Jew was awaiting him as he left to go home. When he had been fortunate he gave the five roubles lightly enough, when he lost he relieved his feelings by using strong language; but the interest was always forthcoming even when the debtor was obliged to go without his dinner. At the end of the year the Jew eagerly renewed the terms. Many years have now elapsed since the bargain was made, but the Jew does not fail to apply for his five roubles every morning, and X—— calculates that the loan of 1,800 roubles has cost him many times that amount.

The reader has already seen how the Jews in the country settlements eke out a living by lending small sums of money to the peasantry. But these are not the only ones to live upon the Polish community, producing nothing but ever busy hanging around the palaces of the magnates and the hut of the clodhopper alike. None are so ubiquitous as the "factors" who spend their days in squires' farmyards and stables. The Jewish factor is quite a feature of Polish country life, and there is a Polish proverb to the effect that if you throw him out of your door he will crawl in by the window.

One meets him at every turn; when the corn is only a few inches high he buys it from a needy squire, paying half the sum agreed upon at once. The potatoes often are his before they have flowered. He buys the produce of the land at a risk, and the squire does not get a fair price for it; but as he wants ready money above all things, he does not think of the consequences. Ninety per cent. of the country estates in Poland are managed in this way, and the Jewish factor has become so ingrained into the system that I doubt if the most independent and energetic farmer could altogether do without him.

He knows everything that passes in the estate he frequents; when a cow is to be sold, a horse gone lame, or a mare foaled; he will buy everything from eggs to a cart-horse, from lumber to the *dvor* itself, for if he has not the wherewithal to make the purchase, he has cousins

or brothers in the neighbouring settlement who will take part in the enterprise. He and his tribe are ever to be seen about the *dvor*. If they are not in the stables, the cow-house, or the dairy, they are sure to be found in the neighbourhood of the granary, or even further afield, observing the wheat or the barley with calculating eyes. When the squire and his family are at dinner the mad barking of the dogs, followed by shrill protests and the sound of a stick beating them off, announces the arrival of Jankel or Szmul or Mordka, who shows his tattered cap and greasy *halat* on the verandah a few minutes later and asks the illustrious gentry if they have nothing to buy or to sell. Each *dvor* has its own clan of Jews, from the corn factor who drives a trap and owns a villa in the nearest town and could buy his Polish patron out of house and home, to the ragged wretch who tramps to market to buy necessaries for the peasantry and smuggle in a forbidden pamphlet. The meat is brought twice a week to the manor by the Jewish butcher, a flourishing man, who keeps the monopoly for himself and his brethren. More than once the mayors in the provincial towns have attempted to place this profitable business in the hands of non-Jewish butchers; but when the Jewish population predominates, the attempt invariably fails. The Jewish factors, by buying up all the cattle on the neighbouring estates, have absolute control of the market and refuse to sell a single head of cattle to their non-Jewish rivals, who are obliged to put up

their shutters and leave the field to the Jew, who, as meat is scarce, does not fail to tyrannise over his customers.

I remember that whilst spending the summer in the country a couple of years ago a culinary revolution was caused by the butcher, who sent some very unsavoury meat—the English consumer would call it skin and bones—which the housekeeper indignantly returned, remarking that "The illustrious gentry would not poison themselves by eating suff stuff."

"Won't they?" the butcher said, when his journeyman returned with the message, and told his brother butchers, who boycotted the *dvor* in question for the rest of the summer, whilst the "illustrious gentry" humbled themselves upon poultry until the advent of the partridge season relieved the monotony of ducks and chickens.

The Jew who makes boots and shoddy clothing in winter often turns gardener in the summer. When the orchards are still bright with blossoms he tramps round to the smaller manor houses and offers to rent the garden for the season. If his offer is accepted, he counts the trees, looks at the bloom, and offers a certain sum, bargaining from 25 to 40 copecks per tree. He agrees to give a certain measure of fruit and vegetables to the manor free of charge; if more is required, it is paid for at a fixed rate. Half the rent is paid at once, the remainder to be given when the fruit has been gathered

and sold. Sometimes a contract is written, but such formalities are rarely indulged in. A day or two later the Jew returns with his family and feather beds and takes possession of a hut in or near the orchard. If the season is a good one, all goes well; if not, he appeals to the lady of the manor to release him from his debt, swearing upon the graves of his grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles, aunts and deceased cousins that he will hang himself, his wife and offspring, if "the great and illustrious gentry" bring him to ruin by their hard-heartedness. At first the request is refused, for the squire's wife knows how many cart-loads have left the garden for the neighbouring town, and she tries to get at least a portion of the rent owing to her. But the petitions and threats of suicide are repeated by the gardener and his family until the "great and illustrious lady," alarmed at the prospect of beholding curly-haired Jews and Jewesses dangling from her apple-trees, gives in, and peace is restored. When the squire is asked why he will not employ a Polish gardener to look after his orchard and sell the fruit himself, he answers that it is too much trouble, because nobody will do the packing in the country or control the sale in the town, and that the Jew and his numerous family, aided by mongrel watch-dogs, keep intruders from the orchard, whereas the Polish gardener would let the peasants roam in the garden and help themselves.

The milk market, as we have seen, is almost entirely

in the hands of the Jews, who rent the produce of the dairy as they do that of the orchard and kitchen garden. So it is, from the farmyard to the cornfield. The Jew rents everything and buys everything; he is always on the spot, pays, at any rate, a certain amount of ready money, and saves the landowners a great deal of trouble. He has, too, a fund of information for everybody. He is a walking news-letter. Not only does he know what is passing in the neighbouring town, in the nearest garrison, what the Russians are saying, how many horses are being sent out of the regiment, how much they cost and what they are worth; he has news from Warsaw, aye, and from Petersburg too. It is to the Western mind rather amusing to hear the squires solemnly discuss some impending change in the government which Mordka, or Szmul or Perlmutter, the factor, has told them of, but which generally comes to pass in the way the Jews have predicted. For the rest, the *szlachcic* likes to hear the Hebrew gossip. The roads are bad, neighbours far off and posts irregular. Time often hangs heavy on his hands, and he listens with interest to what the corn factor heard about the governor of the fortress, how much he made over the last building contract, how many blankets were missing from the last consignment, how the priest was cheated over his new cow, or why the peasantry broke the windows of the unpopular squire in the next parish. The Jew knows all these trifling details, because his brother or cousin or wife's

cousin is a factor too, and goes to the garrison and the fortress.

The Jewish factor and his tribe move freely amongst the soldiers, selling them little luxuries and gossiping. It is often they who distribute the revolutionary pamphlet urging them to join the "movement for liberty" by shooting not at their own people, but at their officers. It is they who supply the materials whilst the fortresses are being built and the necessaries for the inhabitants when finished. It is they who sell the fodder for the horses and the rations for the men. The secrets of the commissariat are theirs; they know how much the governor and his staff make over the contracts and the difference between the sum the government is charged and that paid to them. Sometimes the factors have an opportunity of profiting by this knowledge to the discomfiture of the authorities. Soon after the failure of the Moscow revolution, in December 1905, some members of a certain Socialist party were arrested in a large Polish town and sent to a neighbouring fortress. They were necessary to the party they led, and there seemed little prospect of their being set at liberty, or even of undergoing their trial before the court-martial for some time to come. But the ways of revolutionaries are wise, and within a few weeks it was announced that the five Socialists had left the fortress in broad daylight after presenting the sentries with discharge sheets signed by the military governor

and bearing the official seal. The general public once more wondered at the adroitness of the Socialists, whose experts forge signatures and seals so well. But the annals of the party in question tell a different tale. Amongst the Jewish factors who frequented the fortress was a member of the party. He went to the governor one day under pretext of selling corn, and quietly proposed that the five prisoners should be released.

"These are, as Your Excellency is aware, very important men in their party," the Jew explained. "I would not disturb you for men who mean little, but these are wanted. All you have to do is to sign the discharge sheets and give them to me. You will not appear in it. I will do the rest, and your signature will be looked upon as a good piece of forgery. As to the seal of the office, our party has already one in its possession."

At first the governor was very angry, and refused. The Jew did not speak for a few moments, and when he did, he said, "The governor of the fortress at O—— also refused a similar request, but the Jews denounced him at Petersburg, sending in the accounts for the corn supplied to his fortress and showing how much he had made over them. Your Excellency knows that that governor was dismissed from his post. I will see Your Excellency again in a few days."

The factor called in a few days, and the governor signed the discharge sheets. The factor and he understood

each other, and their business relations, thanks to the fate of the governor of O—— fortress, have not been strained.

But every political offender, even though he be a Jew and guilty of nothing worse than distributing revolutionary literature amongst the soldiers, does not slip through the hands of the military authorities. Sometimes the soldiers themselves arrest them, and when tried by courts-martial they are generally sentenced to lifelong exile in Siberia for more serious propaganda. Very often their fate is settled on the written evidence of one soldier, who does not appear because he is on duty. This seems grossly unjust to those who are accustomed to think that a man is innocent before his guilt has been proved. In both political and civil cases the Russian tribunals too often assume that the prisoner is guilty and hear evidence as a mere matter of form. Jews, on account of their reputation for cowardice, are frequently subjected to different forms of cruelty in order that they may confess to having participated in a crime, whether they have done so or not. The following case, which came before a Warsaw tribunal in April, 1906, will illustrate this fact, and though it has no connection with factors, the reader will forgive the digression for the sake of the light it throws upon the way in which the poorer Jews are treated when they come under the shadow of the law.

On the morning of the 19th of June, 1905, a policeman was shot in one of the Jewish market-places in Warsaw,

known as the Janasz market. The place was crowded, and though many market women were standing close by at the time, the perpetrator or perpetrators escaped. The detective appointed to watch the case, a man named Ivanoff, worked hard to discover somebody who would admit having witnessed the crime, and finally found a Jew, Israel Nordwind, a boy of seventeen years old, who fell into his hands quite by chance under a charge of theft, and who confessed to have seen four Jews—whom he named—fire at the policeman. He also affirmed that when the man lay upon the ground one of them returned, let off a parting shot, crying in jargon "*Fama blit*" (for my blood). But when the case came before the central criminal court, not only did the four accused deny their guilt, but Nordwind, the chief witness, retracted every word of his former evidence, saying that he had given it at the suggestion of Ivanoff, who promised that if he did so he would be acquitted of the charge upon which he had been arrested. Other witnesses were then called. But one had escaped to London, another, emboldened by Nordwind's statement, affirmed that she knew nothing about the murder, but had been imprisoned for nine days and forced, under pain of tortures and the rack, to give evidence against the prisoners. The Procurator ordered the prisoners to be discharged, but the police re-arrested one of them before night, and only released him upon a fresh order.

Ivanoff defended himself by saying that he was

morally convinced that the four Jews in question had killed the policeman.

But to return to the factors. They are to be found in the towns in even greater numbers than in the country. There, too, they buy and sell everything for other people, from corn to tickets, from dust to diamonds. They know where stolen goods are to be bought cheaply, and sell smuggled merchandise at a low price. They place money on mortgages and on horses. They buy and sell lottery tickets, theatre tickets, opera tickets. If you have any difficulty about booking a seat to hear a favourite singer, though all the places are sold and the box office closed hours before, the obliging factor is always to be found in the neighbourhood, touting for customers, who buy his tickets at a high price. Do you want to send a message to a friend in prison, to buy a horse, to buy old furniture, to borrow anything, from money to a passport, if you find yourself in a plight, and under the Russian government this situation is by no means unusual, all you have to do is to send for the Jewish factor, and, though he always meets your request with "It can't be done," to raise the pecuniary value of his services, he will do it, if anybody can. When he fails there is no hope.

It is, in short, the Jew who goes everywhere and does everything. Unnoticed and unknown, he holds the secrets of a thousand houses, of a hundred affairs, and the ins and outs of a score of fortresses. Above all things

he knows when to speak and when to be silent, when he can afford to be insolent and when he must be subservient. Little wonder that the Pole cannot do without him, for he has been filling his present position for so many centuries that he has become an indispensable feature of the national life.

One more instance of the way in which the Jew manages to live upon the Polish population by his wits, and I am done with his "back door" influence.

A certain Jew owned a large house in Warsaw, which he was in danger of losing because he had a debt of ten thousand roubles upon the property without the means of paying it off. So he organised a private lottery amongst his acquaintances, issuing one hundred tickets at a hundred roubles each. The tenements of the house, which is situated in a densely populated Jewish quarter, always let well, and naturally the tickets were eagerly bought up, for who would not like to win a house worth fifty thousand roubles for a mere song? The day for drawing the lots at length arrived, and all the ticket-holders anxiously awaited the issue. But when the happy winner claimed his prize, the Jew said: "No, I cannot give you the house; the house belongs to me. If your greed has deluded you I am not to blame. You all know that private lotteries are strictly forbidden, and that if you put the case into court you will get imprisoned as well as I, and what is worse you'll never get your prize, because the lottery is worth nothing in

the eyes of the law. I wanted ten thousand roubles, and you wanted the house. Both sides cannot be satisfied."

The ticket-holders went home sadder, and, let us hope, wiser men.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNAL ORGANISATIONS

EDUCATION

THE Polish Jew is very much hampered in the matter of education, so that, in spite of his natural intelligence, he does not become such a good workman as he might. Not only does the Russian Government make it difficult for him to enter the elementary and middle schools; not only is he restricted as to his attendance in the higher schools and universities, but the superstition of the ghetto, which clings to ancient methods of instruction, condemns him to spend long hours in learning things which are of no use to him. He has four ways of obtaining instruction:—

(1) In the public schools.
(2) In the *cheders*.
(3) In the Jewish government schools.
(4) In the technical schools.

(1) IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In 1887 the then Minister of Public Instruction (Count Delianoff) issued a circular in which the per-

centage of Jews to be received in the middle and higher schools was restricted to the following proportions :—

In St. Petersburg and Moscow to 3; in the towns in the interior governments, 5; in the towns in Jewish settlement, 10.

The local authorities had begun to diminish the percentage of Jews accepted in the schools before this. For instance, in the educational district of Vilno we find the following diminution in the percentage of Jewish students admitted :—

1882, 26·9; 1883, 26·2; 1884, 24·9; 1885, 23·6; 1886, 21·54.

Taking the Universities of Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Kharkow, Odessa, Kieff, Warsaw, Dorpat and Tomsk, the percentage of Jewish students has fallen in thirteen years from 14·8–10·9.

In St. Petersburg it has fallen from 12·7–4·4; but Moscow alone, where the latest statistics give 3·5, seems to have kept strictly to the proportion laid down by the circular of 1887.

In the University of Warsaw, the only one in Poland, we find an increase in the percentage of Jewish students received between 1880, when it was 11·6, and 1899, when it had reached 16·8. The number of Jewish candidates who apply for admittance is far in excess of those who gain it. In the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute, of the 97 Jews who presented themselves for the entrance examination, 30 were admitted. In the year 1900, 70 Jews applied for admission to Dorpat and 18 only were

accepted. In Kharkoff, 60 applied and 12 were admitted. But all statistics on this subject are more or less superfluous until the higher educational establishments are re-opened. There is a general feeling that the restrictions under which the Jews have hitherto worked in the schools will then be abolished, together with other civil disabilities. At present it is hard for the Jewish student to gain admittance into the *Gymnasia* and other middle schools. The official proportion is the same as that for the higher schools. Between the years 1881–1894 the actual percentage fell in the Warsaw educational district from 12 to 9·5.

The fact that the middle-class schools are always besieged by more applicants than there is room for, makes it doubly difficult for the Jewish candidates to gain admission. As a general rule, once there, he works well to keep a good place in his class; he is often better prepared than his colleagues who had not the percentage restrictions to fear, and, unlike them, he nearly always goes through the eight classes of the philological or the seven of the mathematical school. It is in considering elementary schools that we come to the important part of education, because eighty per cent. of the Jewish population cannot afford to give their children more than that.

There is no legal restriction as to the admittance of Jewish children into the elementary schools of the country, but complaints are often heard from their parents that applications are refused, and that the most

important part of the course, such as reading or writing, is taught on Saturdays when their children cannot attend. Roughly, the percentage of Jewesses attending the elementary schools is 17, and of boys 12.

Generally speaking, the Jewish parent prefers his children to attend either the *Cheder*, the *Talmud-Tor* or the *Eshibot*. *Talmud-Tor* is practically the same thing as the *Cheder*, except that it is maintained by the Jewish community for the benefit of those children whose parents are too poor to pay for their education. Here the children are fed as well as taught. The *Eshibot* differs from the *Talmud-Tor*, inasmuch as the pupils are older and the foundation larger. As far as instruction is concerned, they scarcely differ from that time-honoured institution, as much a part of the Polish Jew as his *halat*, called the *Cheder*.

(2) THE *CHEDER*

When the child of the ghetto has reached the age of seven or thereabouts he is sent to the *cheder*, or elementary school, whose origin is wrapped in the dimness of Jewish tradition. The average *cheder* is placed in the typical lodging of the poor Polish Jew. The room also serves as bed and living room for the *melamed*, or master, and his family.[1] The one bed is placed in a corner by the stove; the household gods fill the others, and the pupils, whose number ranges from fourteen to

[1] Over 35% of the cheders are kept by men who rent only one room.

thirty, seated on high forms, take up the little space which is left. The room is filled to overflowing. The floor, which is never scrubbed, is a harbour for all kinds of dirt and rubbish, which mingle with the sawdust that is sprinkled upon it from time to time. In winter the stove is only lighted when the cold is too intense to be borne, and the pupils, dressed in their out-door *halats*, are unable to heat the room with their mere animal warmth. In summer the atmosphere is unbearable to all but those bred in it, and even if the windows and doors were opened, no fresh air would come in, for the odours from the courtyard beyond, where the filth and refuse of the neighbourhood are collected, are worse, if possible, than that in the room. The hubbub is as noticeable as the smell, for it is incessant. The *melamed*, in cap and ragged *halat*, reads out a passage from a book, his pupils shrilly repeat it, some quickly, others dragging in long after their neighbours have finished. The *melamed's* wife, busy with unsavoury pans, or tending her offspring, shouts to make herself heard; the elder daughter, a sickly girl, who sews buttons on to ready-made shirts, puts in a remark every now and then; a hunchbacked boy shouts, and the result is such a mixture of sound and smell that one wonders which makes the air the heavier. But neither master nor pupils seem to object to it, and, truth to tell, the *melamed* is no better than his surroundings. He is well on in the forties, and looks like the hundreds of poor Jews one passes in the ghettoes of the Polish towns. If he cries

shrilly or makes frantic gestures in his attempt to keep the children quiet, they are too frequent to impress them. Probably his task bores him as it does them, for neither master nor pupil see any goal in the lessons, which are always the same and oral. He has no idea of making them interesting, because he himself does not understand the meaning of the passages he teaches. The poetry of Hebrew scriptures and the wealth of Hebrew history are not for him. He has never been taught their import, empty words and disconnected phrases are all the psalms of Israel's King and the song of his prophets can give him. His qualifications as a teacher are of the poorest. He began to keep a school out of despair, after failing in other walks of ghetto life. Any Jew who has attended a *cheder* in his youth or learned portions of scriptures off by heart at home may turn *melamed* without more preparation. Quondam factors, whose Polish clients have deserted them, small tradesmen gone bankrupt, master bakers and tailors baffled by economic conditions, swell the army of those teachers, from whom the Jewish proletariat culls its education. They cannot enlarge their pupils' minds or fit them to battle with Russian or Polish competition in the workshops because they rarely know any language but Yiddish, and their own minds are as cramped as their native ghettoes.

In the *cheders* of Kieff—a fair sample among Jewish settlements—only six per cent. of the teachers can teach any Russian at all. Forty per cent. of these *melameds*

were artisans or stall-keepers, and eighty per cent. have had no better education than that afforded by the *cheder* or the *eshibot*. The method of teaching is as primitive as the other arrangements in the *cheder*. When the *melamed* has gathered his pupils together he divides them into groups according to their ages—one group has a lesson whilst the other amuse themselves as openly as they dare. Except in the rare cases in which the *melamed* keeps an assistant, the other groups have no tasks allotted to them whilst their comrades are being taught, for they have no books, and could not read them if they had. The course is supposed to consist of instruction in writing and reading Hebrew. The writing is generally left out of the programme, and the reading is mostly done by the *melameds* themselves. Some of them try to teach their pupils the rudiments of Russian grammar. I say "try," because the master knows so little about his subject that his lesson recalls the parable of the blind leading the blind. Both *melamed* and pupil fall into an intellectual ditch, in which they grope for seven, eight, and even ten hours a day, to keep them in which their parents pay from 36*s*. to 50*s*. a year, and from which they emerge at the end of four or five years with a small stock of useless knowledge. That is to say, they can repeat a few scriptural texts, in a meaningless way, and know a number of ancient Hebrew words without being able to construe them into sentences, or having any idea of the history from which they are taken. They know nothing of arithmetic or the rudiments of the country's

language. They have no idea of the world around them. All they are taught of the Gentile and his culture is to hate both. The pity of it is that these centres of ignorance, in which disease is more successfully disseminated than knowledge, and from which Jewish children emerge sickly, stunted, and often deformed, are to be found throughout the ghettoes of the Russian Empire. True, their registered number is only 1701. But few *melameds* can afford the expense of the three roubles registration fee, the photograph and testimonials which must accompany all official applications, and they content themselves with taking some twenty pupils without troubling about formalities. The Jewish Colonisation Society, which has done invaluable work in showing up the condition of the Jewish masses in Russia, affirm that the actual number of *cheders* for the Russian Empire is at least 24,540, of which 5,724 are in Poland, which has a Jewish population of 1,306,576. The same authority assumes that on the average one private *cheder* is opened for 199 Jewish inhabitants, and, in the Kingdom of Poland, for 33 Jewish children.

This number is enormous compared with that of voluntary schools maintained by the rest of the community, for it forms 31·2% of the total number of such establishments in Russia, although the Jews form but 4·1% of the whole population. The Mahometans, who form 11% of the whole population, maintain 29·7% of the voluntary schools, whilst the Christian population (84%) maintains 40%. That is to say, the Jews maintain three

times as many voluntary schools as the Mahometan, and fifteen times as many as the Christian population in Russia.

Girls are rarely found in the *cheder*, 5·8% being the average in most places and in still lower percentage in others,[1] but neverthèless 55·8% of the Jewish children who are of a suitable age for attending school go to the *cheders*, and of these some fifty per cent. are the offsprings of parents who earn less than one rouble a day. And yet the *cheder* is not cheap. The fees vary from 18 to 25 roubles a year. Allowing 25,000 *cheders* with an average attendance of 14 pupils, and supposing that they all pay the minimum fee of 18 roubles, we have the sum of 6,300,000 roubles, or about £630,000, annually spent upon a useless education by the poorest part of the population. But, as a matter of fact, the sum is much larger, for we may safely assume that at least one-half of the children pay 20 roubles per year, which brings the budget up to $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions of roubles, the burden of which is borne solely by the Jewish population, and which works out roughly at 150 copecks per head; whereas the rest of the community pay 23 copecks per head for elementary education, which, if it does not come up to the standard of the Western world, is incomparably better than that given in the Jewish *cheders*.

The children of the ghetto cannot get any more education than these establishments afford them. Their

[1] The authorities refuse to allow *cheders* for girls to be established.

parents, taxed to the utmost to keep them at all, send them to work in some sweating shop when they have left the elementary school. But Jewish secondary schools do exist, though their number is much smaller than that of the cheders.

(3) JEWISH GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

In the year 1817 an Imperial Ukaze decreed that Jewish schools under the control of the Government should be established in the Kingdom of Poland. In 1844 these, together with the Jewish communal schools (*Talmud-Tors and Eshibots*) and the Jewish district schools, were brought under the same jurisdiction.

The Jewish Government schools were primarily intended to give Jewish children a general elementary education, together with lessons in Hebrew, religion, writing and reading. A large part of the time was devoted to Hebrew, but the educational authorities appear to have been over-anxious to teach the Jew religion in their own way, and to bring their influence to bear upon the religious life of the Jewish settlements. They ordered Hebrew books of their own choosing to be used in the schools, and appointed teachers who had little or no sympathy with the Jewish element to expound them. The result was that teacher and pupils are entirely out of touch and often at variance upon what the pupils consider the most important part of the school curriculum. According to the latest statistics

there are 130 of these Jewish schools in the Kingdom of Poland and 820 in the Russian Empire. It is computed that one of these schools exists for the accommodation of 5,525 Jewish inhabitants, which means that there are 27 times as many *cheders*. One Jew in 70 attends the Jewish governmental school, whilst one in 13 attends a *cheder*. As far as secular education is concerned, the teachers are fairly well qualified; they have generally gone through one of the teachers' schools. Their pupils complain that their knowledge of Hebrew history is insufficient, and that they are too inclined to sacrifice this part of the educational programme to the other.

In the district boys' schools, which are also under the Government, the teachers are often self-taught and have no accuracy or method. Only one-tenth of their number have finished even the middle schools, and one-sixth of them have no certificates at all. As a matter of fact they are mostly ordinary *melameds*, employed simply because they can teach Hebrew more or less efficiently. Men like them form more than one-third of the staffs of the communal schools.

The girls' schools seem to be better off in the way of teachers, of whom more than two-thirds have finished the middle schools and hold certificates for home teachers.

Nearly all these schools are badly provided with globes, atlases and maps—in fact, many of them can only boast a few of the last, and it is computed that only

one-third of the Jewish schools in the Empire are furnished with globes. Drawing instruments, compasses and rulers are very often conspicuous by their absence.

The fees for the year vary from 11 to 22 roubles. The girls' schools are generally dearer, as the teachers are better prepared and the classes more numerous. In the district schools part of their cost is defrayed by the different Jewish societies.

The parents of children attending most of these schools cannot afford to keep them there for the whole course of study. Many of them are taken away as soon as they learn to read and write, and sent to work in shops and factories. In the government of Warsaw only 3·9% of the scholars go through all the classes.

In the *Talmud-Tors*, where the course extends over from three to four years, and the children are taught for nothing, 5·4% of the girls and 7·8% of the boys finish the course. Their parents look upon it as so much wasted time once they have mastered the art of writing and spelling, and the consequence is that only half as many Jewish children complete the elementary course as the Polish or Russian. This disadvantage is felt as soon as the boys enter factories and works, for the average Jewish artisan has little opportunity of mastering a craft. The trade passes from father to son. When a boy has left the *cheder*, he goes to a master craftsman in the ghetto, who knows very little about his

work. There are many reasons connected with his religious life which prevent him from being apprenticed to a Polish master, and so he misses all the technical part of his trade, and when he has done his term with a co-religionist, he has not learned to work with good materials or to draw or trace his own designs. In fact, he never sees good models, and has not the slightest idea of keeping his work clean or giving any care to its finish. Little wonder, then, that when a boy taught in the average Jewish workshop becomes a master in his turn, he is obliged to confine himself to the poorest and least remunerative work, or, if he enters a Polish shop, is only fit to execute the humblest jobs, and is doomed all his life to be an assistant.

Unfortunately, industrial schools are few and far between in Russia, and the few there are afford little or no space for the Jewish people. The Jewish Communes are already overburdened by self-imposed taxation for the support of elementary schools, to say nothing of hospitals, synagogues and various charitable institutions, all of which have suffered severely during the past two years from the results of the economic crisis which has asserted itself throughout the Empire. It is therefore a matter of surprise that the Jewish community has been able to found the cheap technical schools which, imperfect as they are, exist in some of the Jewish towns and settlements.

(4) TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

These are of three kinds:—

(1) Technical schools.
(2) Technical classes.
(3) Masters' schools.

The course in the technical schools covers a period of three and even four years. Pupils learn the practical part of their trade and drawing as well; most of them have gone through an elementary school and know how to read and write. The idea of these schools is to turn out good foremen and masters with a thorough knowledge of their work. But the teachers are bad, and have neither a fixed plan nor a programme of the course of instruction.

The Technical Classes are attached to elementary schools, and the work done is more useful in filling up the time left over from the general programme than anything else; at least four-sevenths of the school day is spent on elementary education, leaving the rest for instruction in trades, which is given without method. In 40% of these classes no drawing or tracing is taught at all. They have not given the results which were expected. In many of them the pupils are only taught handicrafts, and leave without any knowledge of mechanics. In others, orders are received, but as a rule, the pupils do not execute them. The girls' classes are confined to teaching plain sewing and knitting.

In the *Masters' Schools* the teaching of trade takes the foremost place. Pupils of both sexes have the opportunity of devoting the greater part of their time to practical work. A good deal of attention is paid to instruction in drawing and tracing, but the fact that many pupils who do not know how to read or write are admitted hinders progress, especially in designing and executing the more complicated and finished work.

The teaching staff of these schools does not stand high. The teachers are often themselves ignorant of the technical part of their work. They have had no training but what the Jewish shops can afford them. It is a very rare thing to find teachers in the girls' schools who have been through a course in the industrial schools, either in Russia or abroad; they know next to nothing of the subject they attempt to teach, and often have not as much as a qualifying certificate from the elementary schools.

The lack of good teachers is especially evident in classes in which carpentry, sewing and metal working are taught. The lack of good Jewish masters for weaving, ceramic work and modelling is such that these crafts cannot be introduced into the school curriculum, a fact which debars the Jew from competing with the Pole in these branches. But, bad as these schools are, the pupils rarely finish them.[1] In the majority (60%) of cases this is owing to the poverty of the parents—in 17% to the

[1] 28% in boys', and 24% in girls' schools.

inaptitude of the pupils. This latter reason is not so general among boys as girls.

When we consider the above facts, it is not difficult to understand why thousands of Jewish youths, without any education, utterly unable to cope with modern economic conditions, are, by their backwardness or ignorance, a weight upon the communal organisations which look after the Jewish poor as far as their limited resources permit.

These organisations include the Commune, the *Kahal*, and the *Rabbinat*.

The Commune, the *Kahal*, and the *Rabbinat*

Although, as will be seen later on, Jewish Communes and *Kahals* existed in Poland many hundreds of years ago, the date of Jewish local government as recognised by law is generally put as the year 1821, when the following regulations were passed:—

(1) The Jews of each town to organise a Commune in which the executive body shall be elected by all members of the Jewish community who pay a tax.

(2) The executive body to fix the amount of the tax according to the financial resources of the several members of the community.

(3) The money thus collected to be expended upon religious culture, education and charity.

The executive body of a Jewish Commune is known as a *Kahal;* except in Warsaw and Petersburg, where the

word has been dropped for another term which is best translated by the words "Executive Committee." The power and influence of the old *Kahals* were proverbial. To-day, though many changes have taken place, the executive body of a Jewish Commune plays a large part in the life of the Jews, and is in many ways a bureaucratic institution which is now meeting with a lot of criticism from certain parties in the Jewish communities. This is especially observable in the big towns, and I have chosen the Commune of Warsaw because of its large field of work and the various parties which are trying to influence the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee of the average Commune consists of fourteen members, elected every three years by the Jewish community. In Warsaw, only those who pay an annual tax of at least fifteen roubles have a vote, but the rate is much lower in the smaller towns, and varies with the size and prosperity of the community. Women are excluded from the elections and men can vote by proxy.

According to the prescribed regulations, the candidate who obtains the largest number of votes becomes President of the Committee. This does not work well in the larger Communes, and at Warsaw the leader is chosen by the Committee in the following way. They decide upon the man they want to lead them, and if he has fewer votes than another, the latter gives his up until a majority is obtained.

The President of the Town then confirms the Communal President's election, and presents a list of Committee for the Governor-General's assent. The Vice-President is chosen unofficially by the Committee.

The Commune of Warsaw has asked the Government to introduce the following reforms:—

(1) To allow every man who pays the smallest communal subscription to vote at the elections.

(2) To increase the number of the Executive Committee to eighteen, with three for replacing members who may be absent.

(3) To accord the Executive Committee the right to elect its own president.

The Government has refused to consider this request until local government has been established.

The Executive Committee meets once a week to discuss business and pass resolutions. In Warsaw their decisions are carried out by thirty-two officials; two hundred and fifteen clerks being employed by the Commune. The duties of the Committee are multifarious. With the aid of sub-committees, chosen from among the fourteen members, it imposes the tax known as the communal subscription upon the community, controls the expenditure in connection with the synagogues, schools, hospitals, etc., appoints clerks in the different institutions, has control of the communal estate, real and personal, distributes the monies voluntarily subscribed for charitable purposes, and governs the

educational, economic and charitable institutions in connection with the Commune.

In Warsaw all this business is divided into eleven departments, which respectively control—

General Business,	The Budget,	Charitable Institutions,
Taxation,	Schools,	Workshops,
Loan Bank,	Pawnshop,	Legal Department,

and the suburb of Praga.

Each department is composed of a president, vice-president, and one member, who discuss their business before bringing it before the general weekly meetings. The department in control of the finances is responsible for the annual budget, a report of which is presented to the President of the Town and finally sent to the Ministry of the Interior. At the time of writing, the statistics for the year 1905 are not ready, but the following figures give some idea of the way in which the Jewish Commune at Warsaw expends the money which passes through its hands. The figures are extracts from the financial report for the year 1904, and have been kindly given by a member of the Executive Committee.

The Commune possesses twelve buildings, not counting the Jewish hospital in the Wola district, built at a cost of £120,000. The expenditure and income in 1904 amounted to nearly £31,000. In the year 1878 the funds of the Commune amounted to £3,790, they are now worth £70,500. There is a reserve fund of £3,750.

EXPENDITURE.	£	INCOME.	£
Education	9,000	Taxes	15,600
Charity	8,100	Contributions	6,780
Hospital, Orphanage, Alms-houses, etc. ...	4,150	Cemetery Dues... ...	3,000
Maintenance of Cemetery	3,180	Legacies	4,000
Various	4,050	Various	1,600
Obligations	2,000		
Total ...	£30,480	Total ...	£30,980

These figures are enormous when we take into consideration that only a very small proportion of the Jewish community can pay anything at all towards communal expenses. According to the calculations of the Executive Committee, the Commune contains 65,000 families with an average number of five members, and of these, barely 10,000 heads of families can pay any tax or contribution at all. Of this number again, only one-third pay more than thirty shillings annually.

As no municipal aid whatever is given, the well-to-do members of the Commune have to bear the burden of the maintenance of the various expenses enumerated on the table.

Lately, the tax, which is fixed by the Committee according to the financial resources of the several members of the community, has been increased, as more than 300 heads of families have been unable to continue to pay their communal subscription in consequence of the depression which now prevails in all branches of business.

At first sight it seems rather arbitrary treatment on

the part of the Committee to decide how large a tax each member of the Commune must pay, and many members of the Commune complain of the Committee's despotism in this respect as in others. But an incident which occurred quite recently seems to point to the fact that great care is exercised to ascertain the real amount of a man's income before the tax is levied on him.

A Jew complained to the President of the Town that his Commune had levied too high a tax upon him. When the affair was looked into, the Executive Committee satisfied the authorities that the evidence of a delegate from the income tax officials is always taken and carefully sifted before a tax is levied, that when a member of the Commune appeals, his case is considered again, and if it transpires that he has been too highly assessed, the amount is lowered. The Committee also showed that the Jew in question was quite able to pay the tax, and had appealed without sufficient reason.

The larger Communes maintain various charitable and educational institutions, such as crêches, orphanages, alms-houses, asylums for idiots and elementary schools. These institutions, although quite insufficient to meet the demand, do much to better the condition of the sick and indigent and to raise children above the level of the ghetto.

The crêches take a small sum from the mothers of the babies who are left there. The orphanages and schools are free. In the orphanages children between the ages of two and seven are taught habits of cleanliness

and order, attend a sort of Kindergarten class, where they play games, sing Polish songs, and do easy physical drill. The healthy conditions under which these children are reared, the large rooms and the appearance of the inmates compared with those who crowd the streets of the Jewish quarter, make one regret that only 1,000 children in all can be accommodated.

At the age of seven the girls are sent to a sewing school and the boys to one of the communal *Talmud-Tors*. These schools are very different from those described above. Though their number is necessarily limited, they well bear comparison with similar institutions in Europe, and are even better managed, as far as attention to hygienic conditions is concerned, than many in richer and more civilised countries. The pupils are taught Polish, Russian and Arithmetic. Each child is clothed, fed and—an attention not every child of well-to-do Polish parents receives—sent to a bath twice a month. The Commune has no official permission to teach Polish, and its request to be allowed to establish a teachers' college has been refused. The Government, true to its policy of Russification, would give a concession on one condition, that is the employment of Russian and orthodox teachers. The Commune, partly because many of its members are sincerely attached to Polish culture, partly because the children in the elementary schools must be fitted to compete with Polish and not Russian rivals in the mills and workshops, will not hear of this. The consequence is that, although

the grounding is infinitely better and the course more comprehensive than that in the *Cheders* and *Talmud-Tors* over which the time-honoured *melamed* presides, the teaching is far from what the men and women interested in these schools would like it to be.

Then there are trade classes which give instruction to 1,800 boys and 210 girls; and here again the Commune is cramped for lack of funds. These elementary schools have been started by the Communes at Lodz, Piotrkoff, Plock, Czenstochova, and Lomza.

There are also two Jewish schools of farming in the Kingdom of Poland, one near Warsaw, on the estate of Mr. Bersohn, with a hundred pupils, the other at Czenstochova, with thirty pupils. The teachers are Poles, and after finishing the course of instruction, the pupils obtain situations as managers and bailiffs on estates belonging to rich Jews.

During the past two years an asylum for the deaf and dumb has been established by the Warsaw Commune. In this and a few other large Communes evening classes are held for youths engaged during the day in the Jewish workshops and factories. Lessons are given three times a week in Polish and Russian, and on Saturdays, religion.

In the Warsaw Commune from 140 to 160 boys are received into these schools free of charge. Besides these *Talmud-Tors*, trade classes and evening schools, the Warsaw Commune maintains fourteen elementary schools at an annual cost of £3,100.

The charitable institutions do good work and have been much appreciated by the Jewish poor since the Universal Strike of the autumn of 1905 brought thousands of the proletariat face to face with starvation. Cartloads of potatoes, flour, etc., to say nothing of warm clothing, were distributed free by committees appointed for the purpose. Two establishments which have always to turn away applicants for want of funds are the pawnbroker's shop and the loan bank. The pawnbroker's shop advances money free of interest upon articles of clothing, furniture, jewellery, etc. More than £4,140 was lent in this way in Warsaw alone during the winter 1905-6. The loan bank in the same Commune lends sums varying from £5 to £20 to artisans and small tradesmen. The Jewish hospital, alms-houses, and asylum for idiots, though connected with the Commune are not under its complete control, being managed by separate committees.

The Executive Committee is generally composed of Conservatives, who cling to all the old Hebrew traditions, and would exclude secular education from the school curriculum; Moderates, anxious to combine the two in equal proportions; and the Progressives, bent upon bringing the organisations of the Commune up to modern standards.

At the last elections, which took place a couple of years ago, the Sionists made their appearance for the first time, much to the concern of the other parties, who have no sympathy with the movement, and although neither of the three candidates was elected, the number

of votes they received warned the Committee that they may prove to be an element to be reckoned with at the next elections.

Apart from political opinions, which are fully represented in the Commune, there is a large party at Warsaw which clamours for reforms in the general plan of communal administration, and especially in the Executive Committee. This party has been grumbling in a suppressed way for some years, but during the last few months its voice has been heard in louder tones, and there is no doubt that the agitation will bear fruit at the next elections. One of the party, a man whom his colleagues generally choose as spokesman, boldly criticises the Executive Committee. Among other things he says :—"At present the whole business of the Commune is managed by a small committee of fourteen men, who levy taxes, take cemetery dues, appoint clerks and officials in the communal institutions, and what is more than all this, dispose of the communal funds without consulting the wishes of those who have subscribed the money, controlling the expenditure of all the charitable, educational and economical institutions. This Executive Committee acts in an autocratic manner, and passes all resolutions without the concurrence, and often without the knowledge, of the Jewish community. I even venture to affirm that the way in which they spend the communal monies, without the consent of the other members of the Commune, is illegal, for, by a circular published by the Committee of Religious Faiths and Public Education in

the year 1830, and by a further regulation, issued in the year 1852, it was decreed that all monies given for the maintenance of "Houses of Prayer" (synagogues), Rabbinats, hospitals, charitable institutions, cemeteries, etc., must be disposed of according to the wishes of the majority of the members of the Commune. The Executive Committee does not comply with this regulation. It seems clear that it was drawn up in order that all the members of the Commune might have a voice in the expenditure of their money. These people are obliged to pay taxes levied by the Committee, whether they will or not, and all the privilege they get in return is the right of electing a body of men to dispose of their contributions, and even this privilege, if it is one, is denied to a very large proportion of the community, because of the high tax necessary for a vote. These arrangements are contrary to the most elementary ideas of democratic government. But as a matter of fact, the Executive Committee of the Commune is a despotic organisation, for, with the exception of the local magistrate, who is its nominal chief, and, *de facto*, never interferes, it is under nobody's control, and responsible to none for its actions. This does not matter so much in the small towns, where the whole Commune consists of a few hundred members, whose ideas and aims are about the same, and who may, by taking an interest in the activity of the *Kahal*, manage to suppress any autocratic tendencies. But the case is very different in a large town like Warsaw, where the Jewish Commune, the largest on the Continent, contains

over 300,000 members, who hold various views, from Chassidism to the most advanced Socialism. The management of such a Commune should be in the hands, not of fourteen men, but of a much larger body enjoying the confidence of every class and every shade of opinion in the Commune. Moreover, this body ought to be a permanent institution, and the Executive Committee ought to respect its decisions as the expression of public opinion. The number of members of the Committee should be increased to twenty-four, and a group of representatives, elected by the Commune, ought to control its movements. These representatives should have the power of inspecting the budget, of organising a taxation committee, of electing Rabbis from among the candidates who present themselves, and of representing the Commune in all subsidiary institutions. The deliberations of these representatives should be open to any of those members of the Commune who wish to attend, and the Executive Committee should be obliged to present them with a full report of business done during the year. These arrangements would do much to increase the usefulness of the Commune and develop its possibilities, as well as repressing the bureaucratic tendencies of the Executive Committee. At present the Jewish press only publishes as much of the Communal reports as the Committee cares to give, and it follows that they are scanty of facts and rich in praise of that body's good qualities. Only inspired organs publish an account of its proceedings. This is not the case in

Western Europe, and in Vienna the committee meetings are open to the Jewish community.

"All those who speak enthusiastically of the activity of the Jewish Communes in Poland and in the rest of the Russian Empire make one great mistake, that is, they compare the Communes here with those in other parts of the world. They forget the enormous difference in the conditions under which the Jews live here and in other countries. There, their numbers are much smaller and their financial position better. There, the Jewish Communes confine their activity to building synagogues, keeping up cemeteries, attending to ritualistic observances, and in rare cases to building hospitals, almshouses, and orphanages. But in Poland the case is very different. Thanks to political and social conditions, and partly also to Talmudism, the Jews in Poland have preserved their exclusiveness. At one time, when Poland was a purely agricultural country, the Jews formed the commercial class. Now that agriculture has to a great extent given way to industry, they are obliged to earn their living as artisans. This is not at all easy for them; the few national schools the country possesses do not take Jewish pupils willingly, and the corporations, clinging to old traditions, exclude Jews. The consequence is that they are bad artisans and mechanics. Their bad health and the different religious observances are also against their taking a good place in the industrial world. Unfortunately, their physical deterioration is on the increase, and in a country in which the Jewish masses live under such

adverse conditions as in Poland, the Communes ought to do something more than manage cemeteries, slaughter-houses, and the *mykva* (ritualistic bath). They ought to look after the moral, physical, and economic development of the community, and fit it to compete with its rivals. The schools are badly in want of funds, and the management of the hospital in Warsaw is on a par with the relations between the subscribers and the Committee. The Jewish community gives thousands of roubles to keep up this hospital, which is under the control of one man, the Curator. The patients are always complaining of the food, and, if the evidence of doctors who are not on the regular staff is to be believed, the complaints are not altogether unjust. The hospital servants are so badly paid that only a very inferior class of person will take the situations, and the consequence is that the patients are badly nursed and fed. Besides this, the accommodation is quite insufficient. Years ago, when the Jewish population in Warsaw did not exceed 30,000, there were 400 beds; to-day there are only 500, which means that, whereas the population has increased by 900 per cent., the number of beds has increased by 90 per cent., and this in spite of a great increase in sickness, caused by bad food and dwellings and increased poverty. The hospital should be under the complete control of the Jewish Commune, which should also take steps to establish a sanitorium to meet the growing scourge of consumption and the prevalence of nervous diseases among the inhabitants of the ghetto. But of course,

these are all questions which can only be satisfactorily solved when local government, in the widest sense of the term, has been given to the towns and to the Communes as well. At any rate, Jewish opinion has been aroused of late, and the days of a bureaucratic Executive Committee are numbered."

The mere observer wonders where all the money is to come from if sweeping reforms are to be made by a community of which only a small fraction can afford to pay anything at all for its various institutions. As far as elementary education is concerned, the abolition of the *cheders* and their substitution by elementary schools of a modern type would cost the parents of the children who use them no more than they now pay. The difficulty would be to overcome the Conservative views of the parents, who look upon the *melamed* as a sacred institution, and rarely think their children ought to learn anything but Talmudic lore.

In contrast to this reform party, the Executive Committee of the Warsaw Commune encounters opposition in another direction from two other sources—the Russian authorities, who seem bent upon doing all they can to prevent the civilised Jews from raising their uncivilised masses above their present level, and the Conservative members of the Commune, who would like the Jewish youth to live in a Talmudistic atmosphere, where his mental range is bounded by the *Beth-Hamidrash* or the *Talmud-Tors*. Quite recently the Sionists sent delegates to one of the Communal orphanages and asked

the Superintendent what she taught the children under her charge. When she told them they asked what language they sang in? "Polish" was the answer. "Why don't you teach them their own jargon?" her visitors asked. The woman said she did not know any jargon, at which they told her she ought to be ashamed of herself for not knowing her own language, and that they would soon find means of replacing her by somebody who did.

As for the policy of the Russian authorities, it is prompted, as an official in Warsaw remarked in a moment of expansion, by fear of the Jew, who is clever and likely to prove a formidable rival if given equal chances. The day of equal chances is, the Jewish revolutionaries say, not far off, and though the Executive Committee of the Warsaw Commune is far from sharing their political opinions, it, and the similar institutions in several other large towns, do what they can to fit the Jewish masses for the unequal fight against prevailing economic conditions. The Conservative members of the Commune cry out against the assimilating influence of the elementary schools, in which the children are taught Polish instead of the jargon of the ghetto, and where secular education takes up a large part of the children's time. The Sionists have much the same complaints to make, and those Rabbis who know no Polish, and are therefore excluded from the livings in the Communal gift, join in the criticism.

Whatever mistakes and shortcomings the Commune

of Warsaw may make, the stranger who sees their efforts to raise at least a small fraction of the Jewish poor from their present misery and fit a few children to earn decent wages, and takes into consideration the opposition from within and without, to say nothing of the lack of sufficient funds, cannot but admire the courage with which the difficulties are overcome and the wisdom with which the money is spent in the good work.

The Rabbinat is in connection with the Commune. At one time the Commune of Warsaw possessed only one chief Rabbi, but a college of Rabbis, known as the Rabbinat, has now been in existence for the past twenty-five years. There are twelve Rabbis in the Rabbinat, corresponding in numbers to the twelve wards into which the town is divided. Each Rabbi presides over the Rabbinat for a month, according to the Jewish calendar. Each of these Rabbis has his own synagogue, where he performs all the duties in connection with his parish. The registers of marriages and births are kept by him, but are inspected by a commission appointed by the Executive Committee. This supervision has been found necessary, because the Jewish poor ignore the regulations in connection with births and marriages, and, if it were not for the vigilance of the Commune, many marriages would be considered invalid by the Russian authorities. These Rabbis do not attend any special school or pass an examination. They study in the *Beth-Hamidrash* until they think they know

enough of the Talmud and the Law, when they go to some of the Rabbinat with a certificate of efficiency and ask them to sign it. The more signatures the certificate has, the better qualified the Rabbi is supposed to be.

The Executive Committee tries to appoint only such Rabbis to the communal synagogues as have a knowledge of Polish and at least some idea of the country in which they live. This is by no means easy, and the need of a seminary is badly felt. Besides the twelve communal synagogues, there are 380 "Houses of Prayer" in Warsaw alone, placed in small rooms in the ghetto, where studious youths listen to the harangues of some Rabbi and pore over obscure passages in the Talmud. There are several hundred such Rabbis in a Commune of moderate size, and in Warsaw, at any rate, the Committee is always waging war with the unsanitary condition in which their "Houses of Prayer" are kept; but, as usual, the police decline to interfere, and these hotbeds of disease continue to multiply.

Years ago the Communal Rabbis were much more powerful than they are now. But during the last three decades, in spite of bitter opposition from the Rabbis themselves and from the Conservatives, their influence has weakened, and secular business now occupies much of the time which was formerly devoted to questions of ritual and spiritual education.

Although the growth of Socialistic parties has done much to weaken the rabbinical power in the larger Communes, it is still in evidence in the smaller towns

and provincial settlements, and in such places a delinquent will confess his guilt to a Rabbi when he has denied it to everybody else.

A short time ago a lot of excitement was caused among the Jews in a small town by the fact that a train, filled with emigrants bound for America, was searched by the police, who arrested the passengers and confiscated their ship-tickets. The Rabbi was appealed to, and found out that the police had been informed that the emigrants were political offenders, escaping from Lithuania. A search was made for the traitor, and suspicion pointed to a Jewish emigration agent, who denied all knowledge of the affair. But when the Rabbi questioned him, he admitted that he had denounced the emigrants because they had booked their passage through another agent, and he had sworn to be revenged.

A few weeks afterwards another case came to my knowledge; this time a graver offence had been committed. Some Jewish merchants had been murdered on the high-road near Lodz, and the man who was driving them said that the assassins were also Jews. The police did not make any arrests, and the local Rabbi determined to settle the question of the murderers' identity for himself, and as he could not get any information by making inquiries in the usual way among his flock, he told all the Jews in the town to shut up their shops and go to the synagogue on Monday morning. When the building was full, the trumpeters attached to

the synagogue blew their trumpets, and the Rabbi called upon all who knew anything about the murderers to come forward. One man gave himself up at once, and some others showed the Rabbi where the rest of the band were hiding. Before the day was over all the assassins were given over to the police.

The Rabbi at Lodz, an old man who has been there for over thirty years, is quite a despot and makes all sorts of rules which the Jews have to obey. His latest invention is a licence for selling milk, for which he makes the Jewish dairyman pay five shillings a month. As few of them make as much as five shillings profit in the time, the complaints against the hard-hearted Rabbi are many and frequent; but as he forbids any Jew to sell milk without his permission, they have to pay it, or retire from the business.

The following incident occurred in Warsaw during the winter of 1905–6. A Jew named N. lent a Rabbi one hundred roubles on a bill, and as he could not get his money back again at the end of the term agreed upon, he went to law about it and obtained an order to seize the Rabbi's furniture. But his triumph was short-lived, for the same evening ten men, armed with revolvers and knives, went to his lodging and forced him to sign a declaration that the Rabbi had paid the hundred roubles. This done, they beat N. and his wife and departed with the declaration.

Another instance of the authority of the Rabbi occurred

a short time ago. A case was brought before a court-martial in which several Jews were accused of killing a policeman, or a *straznik ziemski*, that is a man who performs the duties of a policeman in the country districts. They were sentenced to death on the evidence of some false witnesses, also Jews; and the sentence was finally remitted. But the Rabbi of the place in which the accused Jews lived sent a telegram to the Head Rabbi in Palestine, where the false witnesses had escaped, directing him to call them to the synagogue to make a full confession, under oath, before the Russian Consul. They did so, and thanks to the Rabbi's interference, the case was satisfactorily cleared up.

Nevertheless, political organisations have obtained a firm footing in the ghetto, and play an important part in the current affairs of Poland.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS: SIONISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM

Sionism

It seems scarcely pertinent to remind the reader that Sionism, as a movement, was organised by the late Theodore Hertzl; that Marks and Hess, upon the German side, and Pinskier, Lilienblum and Rosenfeld on the Russian, had written upon the subject before; that Hertzl convoked the first Universal Congress of Sionists in 1879; that this same congress was the first public protest of Jewry against the position of the Semite in Europe, and that those there assembled decided that the sole means of solving the Jewish problem was to open an asylum for those children of Israel who are unable or unwilling to assimilate with the great Aryan races. So far all was perfectly straight sailing for Mr. Hertzl and his adherents. But no sooner did Sionism begin to spread throughout the Jewish communities of Europe, no sooner were branches established within the communes and shelters and Jewish settlements of the Russian Empire, than complications arose, complications as diverse as the spheres which had been represented at the congress, when the Jewish

journalist sat down with the Rabbi and the London banker with the Galician factor. Digressions were inevitable in such a gathering, and before long the adherents of Sionism had divided into two parties, known respectively as the Orthodox and the Progressive. The first dreams of a return to Palestine, where Hebrew culture is to develop upon ancient soil, untrammelled by Aryan oppression. The second advocates the cultural education of the Jewish masses before emigration. The Orthodox Sionists again split into two parties—one adhering to the former project of returning to Palestine, the other ready (theoretically) to emigrate to any favourable colony which the British or another government would offer. The Progressive likewise formulated two distinct professions of faith, cultural and political. The cultural Progressives have just been referred to, and the political Progressives affirming that, as the human character is formed by environment alone, the first step necessary is to obtain political autonomy. The members of this last party are known as the Social Sionists.

Before considering the position of Sionism in Poland, either as cultural separation or as a movement in favour of emigration to Palestine, let us dispose of Social-Sionism.

Social-Sionism aims at converting the Sionists to Socialism before they go to Palestine, in order to facilitate the establishment of a Socialistic government when their dreams have been realised and they have arrived in the Land of Promise. In the meantime they do

their best to overthrow those European Governments which do not attain to their political standard. In Poland the party chiefly owes its recruits to the school-boy and school-girl population. I have not yet come across a Social-Sionist over twenty-five years of age, and, after making various inquiries into the cause, ascertained that its members generally join the Bund before they arrive at years of discretion, preferring to leave Palestine to the Orthodox Sionists, and devote their energies to the establishment of a new form of government which will give the Jews civil rights throughout the Russian Empire. I think we need not linger over the Social-Sionists. Their programme, which is full of Socialistic ideas, and which they have not the influence to carry out, is not particularly interesting. It includes the organisation of strikes, acts of terror, and, the organisers being very young, acts of folly as well.

In July last (1906) the party managed to organise a strike of waiters serving in the Jewish restaurants in Warsaw. Extravagant demands were put forth, and, as the employers could not accede to them, a certain amount of terrorism was brought to bear, not only on the restaurant keepers, but on the strikers as well. At one meeting, when negotiations were on foot, an agitator, who dropped in unawares, turned to a restaurant keeper with the words—"If you don't agree to our terms, we'll come and rip up your wives' stomachs." When the strikers heard this threat, their waning courage was

renewed, and they determined to go on with the fight. Being addicted to the manufacture of bombs, used when circumstances allow, on their political enemies, the Social-Sionists are sometimes unpleasant members of society. The following incident will show that even extreme youth, when engaged upon active politics, may prove dangerous, unless, as in this case, chance places the secret in other hands.

During the month of May (1906), a month in which bombs were particularly prevalent in Poland and Lithuania, the Social-Sionists were nonplussed in the town of Minsk by a casual policeman, who, whilst standing on his beat in the Jewish quarter, noticed that some sparks were proceeding from the courtyard of a house close by. He went to the *stróz* (house-guardian) who told him that a small fire had broken out on the third floor, but that the tenants of the flat had extinguished it without any help. The policeman was about to return to his post, when upon glancing round the courtyard he saw a barrel standing in a distant corner. Being an inquisitive man, he peeped into the barrel and found that it contained two bombs. Mentally connecting them with the fire on the third floor, he telephoned for some soldiers and gendarmes, and proceeded with them to the flat in question. Their search was rewarded by finding a packet of dynamite, a completed bomb, five revolvers, a few boxes of ammunition and various articles used in bomb-making, such as glass cylinders, iron, glycerine and chemicals.

There were also several packets of the party's proclamations. In an adjoining attic they found two more completed bombs, and one awaiting the finishing touches; another store of proclamations and literature printed in Yiddish and Hebrew, three sacks of dynamite and some chemicals. Mr. Wolf Funt, the tenant of the flat, and five young Jews found on the premises, told the gendarmes about the fire. Two bombs were all but finished—they needed but the addition of iron-scraping to render them ready for use, when by some chance the dynamite they contained caught fire. Funt and his accomplices, anxious above all things to keep the secret of the accident from the *stróz*, hurriedly put out the fire, and fearing that the police, attracted by the smoke which proceeded from the windows, would arrive to make enquiries, tried to rid the room of the remaining bombs as quickly as possible. Two were placed in the courtyard in the barrel, and a third, not quite filled, was thrown into a neighbouring garden. The policeman interrupted them at this stage of the proceedings, the bombs, dynamite and literature were confiscated and the Social-Sionists arrested. Whom their bombs were intended for did not transpire, but it is to be hoped that the high officials of Minsk felt grateful to the alert policeman whose discoveries interrupted the labours of the bomb-makers.

Cultural Sionism, the Sionism which aims at imbuing the Jewish proletariat with Hebrew culture, was, like all forms of the movement, introduced into Poland from

Lithuania. These Sionists do not intend to conduct the Jewish proletariat back to Palestine. They affirm that Sion or the Sionistic atmosphere can be reached in any land in which the Jews live, whether it be England, Russia, America or the desert of Sahara, that it consists not in territory, but in an atmosphere of separation, in the cult of Yiddish, of Jewish traditions and customs, of the hopes and aims which separate the Jewish masses from the rest of the world.

So much for the theories of Sionism; we will now see how they work out in practice. First let us look at the effect which these theories have made upon the Jewish and Polish communities. Nowhere do we find such bitter opponents to Cultural Sionism as amongst those Jews who, having adopted Polish culture themselves, are anxious that the Jewish masses should follow their example. They regard the jargon with abhorrence and the *halat* with disgust. They look upon them, and justly, as the symbols of Hebrew separatism and as the anti-civilisation sentiments of the ghetto. In order to release the minds of the masses from all the prejudices these two symbols represent, they do their best to introduce the Polish language into the ghetto, and persuade its inhabitants to adopt European customs and clothes. This doctrine of the Sionistic atmosphere is their worst enemy, because the Jewish proletariat, too indifferent and morally blind to care for the civilisation around him, prefers to read his Yiddish papers and attend a Yiddish theatre, where his own sordid existence is

portrayed by those who live and feel and speak as he.

But the assimilator is as strongly opposed to orthodox Sionism. He boldly affirms that the movement is not only injurious to the vital interests of the Jewish proletariat. It is more; it is a cruel deception of those who are blindly attached to it, because it aims at establishing a political and economical Utopia. From his point of view it is a political Utopia, because the Turkish Government will never allow a separate people, ambitious and exclusive, imbued with a mixture of Markism and Talmudism, to live within their domains; because even if Turkey were foolish enough to agree to their settlements, the Christians throughout the world would never admit the Holy Sepulchre—rescued from the infidel with the blood of the Crusaders, stamped with the mark of a thousand traditions, the monument of all that endears the Christian to his faith, the last earthly resting-place of the Founder of his faith, the monument for whose possession whole countries were plunged into bitter wars, for which men have devoted their lives, suffered hunger and thirst, received wounds and courted death itself—to fall into the hands of the very people who mocked and betrayed and crucified Him who was taken from the Cross and laid within that grave. The Sionist leaders, the assimilator affirms, little guess the measure of the Christian's love and reverence for the land whence his faith first sprung. They know as little of the psychology of Christianity as they do of the Judaism

they have ceased to believe in. They forget that fanaticism, the great motive power of human action, is not dead, either in Christian or Jew, in gentile or Semite; they have omitted to reckon with this huge force, which they as non-religious men cannot feel, but which still affects a large portion of the human race. "Were you," the assimilator warns the Sionist—"were you to realise your dream and send the Jewish proletariat to overflow the Holy Land, such a protest would be raised throughout Christendom as the Crusaders of old raised against your own forefathers, driving them with bitter persecutions from all Europe to seek refuge and protection in Poland itself. Then, indeed, would anti-Semitism be aroused against those who dare to desecrate the Holy Land and the Holy Sepulchre." But the assimilator does not stop here. He has arguments of an economic nature wherewith to combat Sionism. He reminds the leaders that Palestine is only capable of supporting one million souls, whereas they dream of transporting nine millions thither; that the world cannot furnish the means of transporting nine millions of emigrants from different parts of the universe; that the Jewish population increases at such a rapid rate that, even if all Jews were Sionists and subscribed to the cause, if all the Jewish millionaires gave a fifth part of their fortune for the purpose, then, and only then, would it be possible to carry out a sufficiently large emigration scheme within a year to equal the increase of the Jewish population during that time. "But even

supposing," the assimilator continues—"even supposing that every Jew be a Sionist—which he is not—and paid his subscription regularly; supposing that every Jewish millionaire sacrificed one-fifth of his fortune and one million Jews emigrated *en masse* to Palestine, how would they earn their daily bread in this Hebrew Utopia? They are bad agriculturists, and, bad as they be, there are too few of them to be able to undertake the cultivation of the land. They do not take kindly to factory work, and leave it as soon as they can afford to exchange the mill for a shop. No doubt they would make very fair artisans if they cared to be taught, for the anti-Semites themselves do not deny their intelligence. But how will they learn in Palestine? At the feet of the Talmudists who think that it is sufficient to expound the Jewish law and observe the Jewish ritual? True, the Jews are excellent merchants, traders and middlemen; but whom will they trade with? What will they sell? How will the thousands of Jews who now earn their living in Poland by running the Poles' errands and acting as middlemen between the producer and buyer, live in Palestine, where they will be incapable of producing anything themselves, and where there are no Poles to produce things for them? Who will finance the factories, and, even if they get established, who will trade with Palestine? Who will buy shoddy boots and clothing? Who will borrow money from the usurer, consult the lawyer or pay the doctor? The Jewish colonies which are already established in the

Argentine, the Transvaal, Canada, aye, and in Palestine itself, advertise the failure of your movement, for in spite of the large sums of money which have been expended upon them, they are developing in an alarmingly feeble manner. What is this Hebrew culture you talk so much about? What civilisation fitted to establish a government and guide a nation under modern conditions can proceed from the cult of the Talmud, of Yiddish, and of the *halăt?* Your Rabbis are against any other cult. They will want to rule the community as Moses ruled the people of Israel. Instead of breaking down the walls of the ghetto and shedding the light of civilisation amongst the inhabitants, you would establish a national ghetto, a state of anti-civilisation, a state which no enlightened Jew will return to."

So the assimilators argue; but they are not the only enemies Sionism has to confront in Poland.

Those Jews who have cast in their lot with the various parties which are struggling for the establishment of civic liberty in the Russian Empire have an unanimous complaint against both the Cultural and the Orthodox Sionists. They accuse the advocates of the Sionistic atmosphere of luring the Jewish proletariat back into the darkness of the jargon and the Talmud, of creating a ferment of anti-civilisation, and a feeling of hatred for all that can raise the masses from the moral and social depths into which they are sunk, of undoing the work of a few decades by conjuring back

the baneful influences of centuries, in influences of the ghetto, of oppression and destitution.

They are not more favourably disposed towards the Orthodox Sionists, for against them they lodge an additional and too just complaint; a complaint that they are absolutely indifferent to the present struggle for freedom which is convulsing the Russian Empire. They maintain that the Sionists gloat over the Jewish massacres and take joy in the laws which fetter the Hebrew, because they see in all the injustice and oppression of a cruel government one great advantage —a facility for the propagation of their movement.

Amongst the Poles themselves, Sionism with its separatism, with its anti-communal and anti-cultural tenets, has only served to increase anti-Semitism. To the Polish nature, easy-going though it be, there is something particularly obnoxious in the contemplation of the better part of a million Jews, whose forefathers found a refuge in the country at a period when the Semite was chivied and chased from all parts of Europe, who have lived upon that country for centuries, some of whom have even amassed fortunes, assuming an attitude of hostile exclusiveness towards the very people to whom they owe so much, flaunting the cult of the jargon, the *halat* and the Talmud before their eyes, and eagerly looking forward to the time when they will have amassed a sufficient quantity of Polish gold to bear them over the seas and establish them in Palestine to continue the cult practised in the land of exile.

"We have no objection to Sionism," the Poles affirm, "inasmuch as it means a speedy return of the Jews to Palestine. Indeed, we did not ask you to leave that land of your dreams and take up your abode amongst us. Once you were here we tolerated you. True you have monopolised our trade and commerce and eaten into the very heart of the community with your factors and your money-lenders, feeding upon it as the parasite feeds upon its prey. No walk of life is free from you —you enter the professions as well as the trades, but we are a lazy people and found you useful. We do not like you personally, but we must admire many excellent qualities which you possess, in which we are deficient, and which, thanks to your presence, we have had little chance of developing. Go to Palestine or America or England as soon as you like. Neither shall we complain very much if you decide to stay, but we strongly object to your living here and spreading your Sionistic atmosphere throughout the Jewish settlements of the country and fanning the feeling of anti-Semitism which lies dormant in the hearts of the Polish masses, and which, if aroused, might lead to demonstrations that we, as a humane and cultured people, would deeply regret, but which the arrogance of the Jewish masses does much to call forth."

Of the two evils the average Pole prefers the Jewish nationalist who aims at establishing a Jewish nation by the side of the Polish, but does not contemplate transporting the spoils of commerce, trade and usury to a

distant land, after creating antagonism between the Hebrew and the Sclav. Nothing galls him so much as the attitude of the Sionist who speaks of the land in which he and his forefathers have lived for centuries as one of oppression, suffering and exile, as a stepping-stone to wealth and Palestine. The revival of anti-Semitism, apparent during the past few years even amongst the educated Poles, owes its existence to the Sionistic atmosphere which many Jews have helped to create.

On the other hand, anti-Semitism is helpful to the Sionist, who considers massacre, oppression and tribulation as the best means of converting the Jewish proletariat to his way of thinking. This fact is sufficiently illustrated in the Sionist organs which adopt a tone of martyrdom, when writing of the conditions under which the Polish Jew lives. The following extract from a Yiddish newspaper is a very fair specimen of the sentiments which are expressed in this kind of literature.

One says—"The longer the country sucks in our blood, the poorer, weaker, more oppressed and darkened we shall become; therefore we must sacrifice all our strength to Sionism, we must offer up sacrifices which will bring us nearer to the goal, for Sionism is the only way of escape from our present unbearable position."

And again—

"Let our blood flow that we may at last come into

our inheritance. We will cover with our corpses the path which leads, not to exile, but to Sion, though every clod of earth we gain there shall exact a sacrifice. We will work not for strange gods but for ourselves alone."

Visions of Jewish massacres and persecutions, of the Poles slaying the Hebrew stranger that is within his gates, are conjured up by such articles. One would imagine to read them that the horrible scenes recently enacted in various towns in Russia, when the Jews were mercilessly tortured, disgrace Poland daily. One would think that the Polish Jew was safe to shed his blood for the Sionistic cause in a fanatical desire to reach the promised Land, the land of his inheritance. This picture of the Jews soaking the land of their exile with their blood and covering the road to Sion with their bodies appears rather terrible. It certainly would be so if the Polish Jews intended to make such sacrifice. But they do not. Rich or poor, cultured or ignorant, they have little sympathy with the Sionism which invests money in Palestine or emigrates there. Though the assimilator's objection might be slightly exaggerated, it is not without reason that he points out that the Sionist lawyer, doctor and shopkeeper, though he may attend party meetings in Poland and even send delegates to the large congresses, does not seriously contemplate the idea of leaving the land of his birth and settling in Jerusalem. Ask the leaders of the Sionist branch in Warsaw when they intend to start for Palestine, or the head of the territorialist branch whether he will go to whatever country his

leader may choose as a colony. Ask the editors of the Sionistic newspapers whether and when they contemplate beginning a new life beyond the seas. They will all tell you that they do not intend—unless forced for political reasons—to leave Poland, that they are bound to that country by a thousand ties of interest and affection, that they foresee a not-far-distant day when Jewish energies and Jewish intelligence will have full scope in the Russian Empire. If you enquire why, under these circumstances, they are Sionists, they will reply that they adhere to the movement, not for their own sakes but for the sakes of the oppressed and indigent Jewish proletariat that cannot keep body and soul together in the country.

Go to the Jewish banker established in the Polish capital, who gives his wealth to the Sionistic cause and ask if he intends to transfer his business to one of the Jewish colonies in America, Africa, Asia, and he will answer "no" with the indulgent smile of the sane man to the mentally weak one. If he does not think you too mad to talk to he will add that Sionism is for the Jewish masses, and that he as a Sionist does all in his power to persuade them to emigrate to Palestine. If you begin to chat with him you will find that he intends to spend a few weeks in Nice next winter, or that he has just been for a holiday in Paris, or is about to take his wife and family to Ostend; that, in short, he has been or is going anywhere but to Palestine. You leave him struck with the impression conveyed by the manner of all these

Sionists, that they were as much in touch with the Jewish proletariat as the Russian landowners of the sixties were with the serfs they only knew from the verandahs of their country houses. You, therefore, determine to go and look for the real Sionist men and women who want to go to Palestine, and turn your steps in the direction of the Jewish quarter, where the proletariat lives. But on your way you call upon a Rabbi, delighted at the idea of finding a man who stands midway between the banker and the masses, who will be the embodiment of all that is Sionistic, looking eagerly forward to the realisation of his pious dreams. You are shown into his stuffy, shabby room, and as soon as he returns your salutation with a slight inclination of his head, you instinctively feel his dislike for you, his hostility to your European dress and speech, a feeling which increases when he sternly tells you that Hertzl's movement is a profanation of the prophets and a blasphemy upon Holy Writ. You leave the silent and uncompromising Talmudist and, once more in the street, pause undecided as to your next step. The Rabbi's reception has chilled your enthusiasm for the Jewish proletariat, and you realise, for the first time perhaps, how wide the chasm is that separates these bearded Jews and bewigged Jewesses from you. As they brush past you gesticulating and excited, you notice one small son of Israel furtively offering a man a revolutionary paper; the incident reminds you that Socialism has done much to weaken the influence of the Rabbis, and gaining fresh courage, you determine to continue your

search for Sionists amongst the masses. You will probably spend the rest of the day in the sweating shops and factories of the Jewish quarter, returning home bereft of all illusions about the influence of Sionism upon its inmates. The result of your researches may be summed up in this way. Roughly speaking, you found the people you came into contact with divided into two groups—Socialists and Orthodox Jews. You found that, whilst the first group treated Sionism with contempt, the second was more hostilely inclined towards it than the Rabbi, whose antagonism for the outward signs of European culture was accentuated in his flock to an extraordinary degree. This antagonism explains their hostility to the Sionism which was founded by Theodore Hertzl. The sweating boot-maker is a Sionist, it is true, but he is a Sionist who absolutely believes what the Scriptures teach him about Sion. He believes that a deliverer shall come to open blind eyes, to bring the prisoners from the prisons and them that sit in darkness from the prison-house. But he does not believe that the Hertzls and Zangwills and Nordans are destined by the Lord God of Israel to be his deliverers. His religion and the prophets are so very real to him that he looks upon such men as those who falsely call themselves by the name of Jacob as the false prophets the Holy Scripture warns him to beware of. He believes that one day his sons and daughters will be gathered from the ends of the earth into the place whence the Lord, for Israel's sins, had caused his forefathers to be taken cap-

tive, and "to be an astonishment and a hissing" amongst the nations whither they were driven. Miserable as he is, his one hope is in that Sion, his one pleasure the thought of returning there, and he repeats the words of Israel's prophets who cried unto the Lord that their houses were turned unto aliens, their young men taken to grind, that the mountain of Sion is desolate and the Lord wroth against him.

But there is no thought of the leaders of the Basle Congress when, pausing in his work in the grimy factory, he turns his soul to Sion and prays to the Lord who shall gather him and his out of the country with "a mighty hand," when "a great company shall go thither," when the watchmen upon Mount Ephraim shall cry, "Arise ye, and let us go up to Sion unto the Lord our God." Amongst his toils and privations this thought of return to Sion comforts him as it comforted his fathers in Babylonian captivity, in Crimean exile or on the steppes of the Ukraine. But those who tell him that the modern Sionist is to take him to the Promised Land are met with a stern reproof for blaspheming against the Scriptures. No, the Sion of the dweller in the ghetto is to be realised by miracles, by the blowing of trumpets at the four corners of the earth. To his mind it is nothing short of profanation to talk of the train and the steamer which are to convey him to the Land of Promise, and of the industry, the tedious industry of exile, which is to support him when he gets there. "Surely," he argues with himself, "the Lord will feed him, leading him in

green pasture. There all will be peace and rest and plenty, for has he not the promise that his soul shall be as a "watered garden"?

He will consent to go in the train and the ship to America and England and to ply his trade there if he cannot make a living in Poland, but never to Palestine, the land of his forefathers, whither the Lord Himself shall lead him.

But not only are his fervent religious feelings at war with Sionism; there is the antagonism of the ghetto as well. To him the advocates of the movement with their European culture and dress are un-Jewish and therefore hostile. He who clings to his *halat* and his jargon cannot bear the European delegate with his short coat and low boots, speaking good German or fluent Polish. He will have none of them. The intellectual lawyers and editors may discuss and subscribe, but the children of the ghetto will have none of their Sionism. It is the old story of the leader who strives to turn the uncultured, morally blind masses to a movement which has originated in the brain of an enlightened and intelligent man, who idealises the masses and applies his own conceptions of an idea to them. The Sionism of Hertzl is one thing and the Sionism of the ghetto another. The two cannot be reconciled, because their respective adherents do not understand one another, and the consequence is that the Sionism of Hertzl goes a begging amongst the very classes for which it was intended, the classes whose position and characteristics have exacted this Jewish

problem, and whose hopes, aims and ambitions only those born in the ghetto and bred in the *halat* can thoroughly fathom.

Anti-Semitism

The average Pole when asked to define an anti-Semite will promptly answer "a man who dislikes the Jews more than they deserve," but I have used the word here in the ordinary sense of the word—as meaning a dislike for the Semite. Sionism in Poland is so bound up with anti-Semitism that it would be difficult to treat of the one without referring to the other. As we have just seen, though Sionism, as Dr. Hertzl and the general public understand the word, is bankrupt in that country, the Sionistic atmosphere is not. The Jews say that its flourishing condition is due to anti-Semitism, that if the Poles were not anti-Semites, the Jews would not be Sionists. The Poles deny this charge, affirming that anti-Semitism is not the cause but the effect of Sionism, that if the Jews had shown any friendly feelings for them, any gratitude for the protection they received centuries back, any interest in Poland's weal or sympathy for her woe, any inclination to demolish the walls of the ghetto, to forget the jargon, to discard the *halat*, to assimilate, in short, with the rest of the community—anti-Semitism would not exist to-day. They meet the charge of increased anti-Semitism—and its increase during the past half decade is utterly

undeniable—with a counter charge of Jewish hostility and Jewish anarchy. They point out that the Bund was the first party to arm the masses, placing the means of exercising terrorism in the hands of those who lack culture and education to curb their passions of race and class; that the revolutionary parties which are given up to bomb-throwing, assassination and other acts of excess, are *de facto* Jewish; that the proportion of Poles to Jews amongst the leaders of these parties is very small; that the Jew, who has been economically dangerous to Polish interests for centuries, has now become a political peril, because, having nothing to gain by keeping quiet and a possible gain in revolt, he has prompted and is guiding the present revolutionary movement.

This conviction prompted the Poles to act with unexpected energy during the election for the Duma. Very little interest was shown in these elections at first because the Jews had declared that they would not participate in them. The Polish community was aroused a few days before the time fixed for voting by the announcement that the Jews had decided to send representatives to the Duma and were engaged in a pre-elective campaign. Warsaw and Lodz, owing to the large percentage of the Jewish element, were threatened with Jewish delegates. The result of this news was astonishing. Suddenly every Polish party took the elections quite seriously, and, what is more wonderful in faction-loving Poland, decided to arrive at a speedy understanding and vote irrespective of party politics for

the National Democrats; otherwise if the votes split up between the Conciliators, Patriots and Progressives, the Jewish candidates would gain the day. Perhaps the best example was shown in Lodz, where, though the Polish and German elements are ever at war, they united against the common foe, voted together, and won the day. The Jews themselves worked with laudable zest. In the provinces those who could not afford to pay their fares to and from the voting centres were supplied with enough money to cover their travelling expenses. The *Kahals*, calling upon every man to use his vote, threatened to impose a heavy fine upon those who neglected their civic responsibilities. Men were sent into the streets to buy voting cards from the needy Polish population.[1] Sandwich men, bearing Hebrew placards calling upon all Jews to vote for their cause, paraded the Jewish quarters. Pre-election meetings were addressed in Yiddish by advocates of the cause. But solidarity, a feature which is generally missing in their political life, saved the Poles; and, in spite of the fact that the Jews form 14% of the total population, their party in Poland did not send one delegate to the first Duma. The Jewish proletariat relieved their feelings by setting up straw figures dressed in the Polish fashion and throwing mud at them. The "Intellectuels" lodged a protest against the conduct of the National Democrats who had "swamped" them, and promised never to forget

[1] As much as six shillings was paid for the cards, which were immediately destroyed.

the slight put upon Jewish interests. Whether this exclusion of the Hebrew element is politically wise, or whether, as the Jews themselves affirm, it will convey but a poor opinion of Polish tolerance to the Liberal Party in Russia, remains to be seen. But the fact in itself is interesting, inasmuch as it shows a tendency on the part of the Poles to keep whatever political right they may obtain under their own control and prevent the Semites from ousting them in the political arena as they have already done in trade and commerce.

Hitherto anti-Semitism has not aroused the Poles to organise a campaign against the economic influence of the Jews. Here and there an increased disinclination to buy from them may be seen, and of late much has been written about the need of organising the Polish commercial element into guilds which will defend its interests, for there is a growing conviction that, as the Jews intend to preserve their own national individuality, some means of protecting the Polish element must be found. But as yet it is too early to foretell what these means will be. In Poland, where men think rapidly and act slowly, questions even of such importance as this one do not get the prompt attention they deserve. No, though anti-Semitism prevails in all classes of the Polish community, it is, as yet, nothing more definite than the instinctive dislike of the Sclav for the Semite, not because he is dangerous, politically or economically, not because he lives on usury, but because he is a Semite, because he talks through his nose, and talks Yiddish, is difficult to throw

off, is half a toad-eater and half arrogant, because he has a hooked nose and a high colour, because he wears a *halat* and his wife wears a wig. This anti-Semitism does not prevent its possessor from dealing with Jewish tradesmen, borrowing Jewish gold or employing Jewish labour. It is content to make use of the object of its hatred even for the object's own gain. But it goes no further. It will not admit a feeling of sympathy between the two contracting parties, it prompts the contempt with which the Pole regards his factor, not because he is a factor, but because he is a Jew. It prevents the Polish lounger from helping the Jewish drayman to pull his cart-wheels out of the snow. It causes the Polish school-boy to call the blots which disfigure his copy-book "Jews," and the peasant to call the teazels by the same name, because they cling to his clothes and are difficult to dislodge. It is, too, though slightly accentuated, the same instinct which prevents a Pole from marrying a Jewess, or a Polish girl from wedding a man who has a Jewish name, and which closes the doors of many Polish houses to the Jews.

But there are times when this sentiment takes a more serious form, when the Polish masses, inspired either by fanaticism or a sense of wrong, assume a threatening attitude towards the children of the ghetto, who then feel that Poland, like Russia, may become the scene of terrible massacres. Such a case occurred in the autumn of the year 1905 when the imperial manifesto of October 17th promised constitutional right to the Tsar's subjects.

The event was celebrated in all the Polish towns by processions, for the Poles are addicted to illusions, and it seemed to them that the promise of the Tsar would bring about a political paradise at once. The least respectable portion of the population preferred to follow red banners and even old red petticoats carried by the Bund and other revolutionary parties, shouting out "Down with Tsardom" "Down with Poland!" "Down with the Church!" down with everything in short but anarchy; the more respectable, however, gathered in front of the churches, singing patriotic hymns and returning thanks for the constitution the Tsar had promised them. Before long it became evident that whilst the Polish element flocked to the patriotic processions, the Jewish element prevailed amongst the red banners and rags. In short, a kind of rivalry sprang up, and when the patriotic population of the city decided to organise a solemn procession of its own upon the following Sunday, the hooligans who had howled themselves hoarse over the "Red Standard" expressed their intention of preventing others from singing "God save Poland." But the national procession was organised so carefully that all attempts to disturb the order of the main body were abandoned. The ruffians among whom, spectators affirm, Jews predominated, therefore turned their attention to the branch processions; and when one left the church on the outskirts of the town, they threw mud, stones and other missiles at the cross and the priests. One of the crosses was struck, and a young Israelite, incensed at the remon-

strances of a man who carried it, shot him. The indignation of those in the procession was unspeakable. The priests had the greatest difficulty in preventing a free fight, and, when the day's ceremony was over and the news of the outrage had spread through the town, black looks and threats passed from man to man in the poorer quarter and warned the Jews that public opinion was very much against them. Their anxiety was increased by the fact that Jewish massacres were disgracing several towns in Russia. The acrimony with which the revolutionary parties, taking advantage of the temporary freedom of speech accorded by the Manifesto, had attacked Church and fatherland during the past few days, only increased the feeling of hostility to the Jews, who, rightly or wrongly, have the reputation of leading these parties. All this caused the quieter portion of the population to fear that another outrage, similar in character to the one just recorded, would induce the Polish masses to follow the example given in Odessa and Kieff and rise against the Jews. Their apprehensions were heightened by the conviction that the Russian authorities would gladly welcome a massacre in "cultured" Poland; they therefore used every effort to avert such a disaster and to keep the national record for toleration at all costs. In the churches the priests mounted the pulpits twice and thrice daily to preach against the evils of racial hatred and the necessity for Christian love and forbearance. In the squares and open spaces laymen addressed little groups, urging them, for Polish honour,

not to allow the passion of the masses to get the upper hand. Pamphlets and proclamations, bearing the same message, called upon the people to refrain from following the example of barbarous Russia and refuse to play into the hands of a hostile government. Householders, fearful lest the mysterious "black hundred," the crowds of hooligans whom Russian misrule had allowed to increase and multiply in the slums of the city, would, incited by the Russian authorities, commence the massacre and set fire to the anti-Semitism of the people, organised self-defence parties which, armed with the best weapons they could obtain, kept watch by night in the large covered gateways of the houses. Excitement ran high. In spite of the universal strike which had cut off all the ordinary means of communication with the rest of the Empire, vague and alarming reports came from Russia. The air was heavy with massacre and disaster, and no man knew what the hour would bring forth. It is in such times that a little incident, a mere trifle, is fraught with giant consequences. For all Warsaw knew, the government in St. Petersburg might be overthrown, and the only machinery, bad as it was, which kept the joints of the communal life together, be destroyed. People could not sleep at night. The least noise in the silent courtyards, the echoes of a domestic difference, the shouts of startled slumberers aroused a panic, when people sprang from their beds and opened the windows to see if the "black hundred" had not begun to massacre the Jews. And if fear and excitement prevailed in the Polish quarters,

what is to be said of the Jewish, where men dared not venture out by day and sat huddled together at night, trembling at every passing footfall, thinking that each patrol was a murderous band, come to butcher the men, violate the women and sack the shops and houses. In several instances the Jewish defence groups, maddened into anxiety, rushed into the streets upon hearing the sound of measured footsteps and attacked the military patrols, a mistake which resulted in an order to disarm and disband all Jewish defence parties and to arrest the members.

They would have fled to Austria and Germany if escape had been possible, but all communication was cut off. One Jew, impressed with the powers of the British Government, went to the British Consulate and demanded protection in the form of a steamer to convey him and his family to Dantzig. The same idea of British prestige caused quite a demand for the "Union Jack." A few rich Hebrews, the envied possessors of motor-cars, escaped from what they thought was certain death. The rest sat at home and awaited their fate. This tension lasted for several days; but as night after night passed and the "black hundred," the bogey of Pole and Hebrew, did not appear, the excitement calmed. The Jews began to venture about the streets, the Polish self-defence groups were dismissed, and the crisis passed. But for weeks afterwards the thought of massacre haunted the inhabitants of the ghettoes.

The following incidents, the first of which occurred in Warsaw shortly before the feast of Passover (1906) will give the reader some idea of the scenes which occur from time to time in the Polish towns to disturb the amicable relations which, in spite of the anti-Semitic undercurrent, generally exist between the Polish and Jewish masses, permitting them to work side by side in the factories without showing any signs of racial antagonism.

One evening a little Polish girl entered a Jewish shop and begged for a piece of *maca* (passover-cake). Rosenzweig, the Jew who owned the shop, gave her some and she went away. But the *maca* pleased her so much that she came back for a second helping, and when she returned for the third time, Rosenzweig, anxious to get rid of the child, swung her up in the air and playfully theatened to put her in a barrel which stood near, if she came again. A passer-by heard the child scream and, upon glancing in and seeing her swung up in the air, immediately raised the alarm that "the Jews want the child's blood to mix their *maca*." This signal has never failed to bring a crowd in a Polish town, and a moment later a very angry one had collected round the shop, Rosenzweig, thoroughly frightened, locked the door and hid himself behind some lumber. The crowd broke the windows and was looking for the hapless joker when a passing patrol arrested the proceedings by enquiring into the cause of the excitement.

The soldiers found Rosenzweig, pulled him from his hiding-place, and took him to the police-station accompanied by the crowd whom the patrol could scarcely keep away from the object of their anger. After giving his version of the affair, Rosenzweig was set at liberty and told to go home. It took him all his Hebrew ingenuity to take him there, for the crowd followed him all the way; and not a moment passed but he had to dodge a blow or a piece of mud aimed at his trembling figure. The little Polish girl cost him dear, for he dared not open his shop until three or four days afterwards.

Not long afterwards a very similar incident occurred in the town of Lomza. A Polish workman took his ten-year-old son out shopping, and went into a Jewish shop for some yeast. The Jew could not find it at first—these little shops are not models of tidiness—so the workman told his son to wait for the yeast while he went on to make some more purchases, as it was Friday afternoon and the Sabbath was approaching. On his return, the yeast was there but the boy had disappeared. He angrily asked the Jew what had become of the child. The Jew as angrily answered that he knew nothing about him. Their loud voices attracted a few loungers who said something about Christian blood and Jewish passover-cakes. The words spread through the street like wild-fire, and the consequence would have been disastrous for the Jew had not the boy turned up amongst those who ran to see what new piece of excite-

ment was afoot. He paid for the misunderstanding he had caused with a sound whipping.

These two incidents show that the old conviction that the Jews are ready to murder Christian children for ritualistic purposes still prevails among the Polish masses, in spite of the efforts of the clergy to eradicate it. It is as firmly rooted in their minds as the belief that to dream of a Jewess is unlucky, or that all Jews are subject to a loathsome disease akin to mange which will show itself even in the offspring of mixed marriages.

Nevertheless, there have been no serious anti-Semitic demonstrations in Poland since the year 1880, when the Jews in Warsaw were the victims of a good deal of horseplay. But the scenes then [1] enacted were of very different character from those which occurred in Russia as recently as the year 1906.

After the barbarous *pogrom* which took place on Corpus Christi day (1906) at Bialystok, some attempts were made to provoke a similar massacre in Warsaw. Proclamations were posted on the houses at street corners calling upon the populace to stamp out once and for all that "parasitic, grasping and useless Jewish race" from among them. But the indignant passers-by tore them down, and the Social Democrats and Polish Party of Socialists replaced them by others. The Social

[1] No blood was shed; the crowds contented themselves with breaking the furniture and splitting up the feather beds in the ghetto.

Democrats, after stating in very plain language that the Russian Government had provoked the horrors of Bialystok, continued :—

"In Bialystok the Jewish proletariat is very numerous : thousands of Jews work in the factories there—they fight side by side with Christians there for political freedom and a better existence. The minions of Tsardom have long plotted to bring these brethren to kill one another. Their provocations failed, for the revolutionary parties exposed their shameful plans and made them useless. But at last a bomb has served their purpose, and the Tsar's hooligans waited in crowds for the signal to begin their hellish work, aided by the Tsar's soldiers, who fired into the houses and let off volleys at the Jews as they escaped from the hooligans." Of course the author of the proclamation seizes the opportunity of preaching the ceaseless sermon of the revolutionary. He says—"This new crime of the Tsar cries out for vengeance. These rivers of innocent blood cry out that life is unbearable until the Monster called Tsardom is strangled, until the knife and the sword are wrenched from the hands of the criminals."

Then capitalism is dragged in :—

"But there is yet another criminal, and that is capitalism, which has grown to monstrous proportions under the protection of Tsardom. Bialystok is its nest. For long years the capitalistic leeches have sucked the blood of the working man. To the struggle! Comrades

and workmen! To the struggle with hideous Tsardom! To the struggle with capitalism, the source of all curses." It is only at the end of the proclamation that the proletariat is abjured to shoot down the first hooligan who looks like provoking a *pogrom*.

The Polish Party of Socialists distributed over a hundred thousand proclamations calling upon their comrades to deal shortly with the provocators. But those they posted on some of the houses in Warsaw deserve the prize in a proclamation competition. After laying stress on the fact that the government had provoked the massacre in Bialystok and the soldiers rivaled the hooligans in torturing their victims by cutting off their hands, legs, noses and ears, it went on to say that, for all the party cared, the rich Warsaw Jews might look after themselves. What the Socialists meant to protect was the Jewish proletariat. Why? Not because the Jewish proletariat is composed of human beings, of men and women with a right to enjoy as full a measure of safety and protection as anybody else, not because a Jewish massacre would shame Poland in the eyes of the world; but because the Jewish proletariat was the most revolutionary element in the country, and the Polish Party of Socialists needed that element to help them to carry out their political programme. But the scenes which disgraced Bialystok on Corpus Christi day aroused the indignation of the Poles, both in that town and throughout the Empire. It was therefore with thinly

veiled satisfaction that they repeated the following sequel to the pogrom.

In the Szosova, in Bialystok, lives a certain Pop (an Orthodox priest) who took part in the procession on the fatal day and was seen mixing with the crowd during the looting which accompanied the massacre. A day or two later some of the richer Jewish merchants, whose shops had been looted, sent a deputation to the Pop to say that they had excellent reason to believe that some looted treasure was concealed in his cupboards. The Pop indignantly denied the charge and refused to open his cupboards. The deputation went away and returned with policemen, and after some delay the cupboards were opened and revealed looted goods to the value of 5,000 roubles to the astonished gaze of the police inspector and the discomfiture of the Pop.

Elated with this success, the deputation next called upon a Russian in the civil service. In his cupboards they found wares which had lately been in their shops and included 3,000 roubles' worth of watches, jewellery and silver. The police took possession of the treasure, and unwillingly penned *protokols* in which the names of two locally prominent Russians figured not as accusers but as accused.

There is yet one form of anti-Semitism to be found amongst baptised Jews. These neophytes often have a bitter dislike for the race from which they sprang, and lose no opportunity of holding up those who still adhere

to the faith they have so recently left to derision. This kind of anti-Semitism, which is totally different from the goodnatured contempt of the Pole—has given rise to a popular saying that no man is as anti-Semitic as a Jew. It affords much amusement and no little wonder to the Polish element to hear a man, whose father frequented the synagogue and wore a *halat*, talk contemptuously of "those mangey Jews" or gleefully point out the Semitic features on his cousin's face, quite forgetful of the fact that his own are of the Hebrew type and that his very speech betrays him as a descendant of the ghetto.

Such is the anti-Semitism we meet in Poland: like the people from whom it comes, it is lacking in energy and aim. Like people from whom it comes it is regulated by a certain sense of national pride, ready, when the moment and the need arrive, to exercise its power or court its passions. It is far removed from the anti-Semitism of the Russian as it is from the toleration of the Saxon. But it exists, and, what is more, exists in the hearts of the Poles in a more definite form to-day than it did five years ago.

Which side was the more to blame at the beginning when the two races first lived side by side, it is difficult to say. But to the mere observer it appears that there has been a good deal to forgive on both sides; and to-day, at any rate, the Jews are as anti-Polish as the Poles are Anti-Semitic. They do not want to assimilate, they do

not want to blend their interests with the interests of the rest of the community. They are striving to assert their national individuality, to live their own lives and attain their own ends, all three of which are as far removed from Sclavonic ideals as the twilight from dawn, as night from day. These tendencies have found expression in the Bund.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS (*continued*)—THE BUND—OTHER REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES

The Bund

To the reader whom chance or business may bring to Warsaw, a visit to the Jewish quarter of the city on a Saturday afternoon will not be without interest. When he has passed the "Government" quarter, leaving the stately houses in the Miodova, where Russian officials are quartered in the confiscated palaces of Polish magnates, he will find himself in narrow streets paved with cobble stones or not paved at all, where the dreary, defaced houses echo the silence of the Jewish Sabbath. Here the roads are for the most part deserted, for the inhabitants have gone to walk in the distant avenues, and stare with the curiosity of their race at the uniforms of the Russian officers or the toilettes of the Polish dames. But by crossing the main thoroughfare of the ghetto and turning to the smaller ones on the left, he will reach the Dzika[1] and be struck by the changed aspect of the street, which is crowded. Jews and

[1] Wild.

Jewesses are walking up and down in groups of two or three, talking earnestly in Yiddish. Not a Sclavonian feature is to be seen, not a Polish accent heard. The stranger who goes there is met with significant looks, and the little crowds which have gathered in the road and on the pavement dissolve almost imperceptibly as he approaches them. Here there are none of the shrill cries of the ghetto. The tones are subdued though earnest; only the gestures of the speaker betray the excitement of the moment. And excitement there undoubtedly is. One feels it in the air akin to that indescribably nervous tension which prevails in a town in times of revolution when the monotony of months is about to be varied by some exciting outbreak. Turn into the street upon the left—it is called the Mila[1]—here the houses are more squalid and the groups thicker. Somebody is holding forth to a large gathering by the *cheder*, a shaky wooden house, the windows of which are shuttered and padlocked in a way which makes one wonder who has put so much metal to protect wood which a strong fist could shatter. A frowsy woman is leaning out of an attic, listening intently. The stranger draws near. The crowd is too interested to observe him. This time the speaker is a young woman, evidently married, for she wears the hideous wig, prescribed by Talmudic law. She is angrily talking to a man who has a better-dressed and more-recently-washed appearance than the rest. His features are Jewish, but he has

[1] Pleasant.

discarded the *halat* and peaked cap. The stranger is soon observed and passes on, followed by hostile glances and muttered remarks. He comes upon more groups, some smaller, others bigger; but two things are to be remarked in all—first, that the speaker is invariably a man of better appearance than his hearers, a Jew, but wearing European clothes; and second, that neither in orators nor crowds are there men or women much over thirty years of age. Many of them are mere boys and girls, pale, sickly, and stunted. Glance at the houses where they have been bred. It is a warm day; the elder people with the young children are on the balconies. The windows are open, disclosing sordid rooms from which the sickening odour of filth and garlic, the characteristic smell of the ghetto, comes. One turns with relief to the street, where the groups have again changed. Somebody has distributed a proclamation. If the visitor can escape the vigilance of the Jews and get near enough to glance at one, he will find that they are small scraps of paper printed in Yiddish; they too disappear behind the *halats*. It is nearly half-past four. The groups increase. The murmur of suppressed voices fills the air. Here and there an excited orator raises his voice to a shrill cry to immediately lower it to a whisper. The crowd by the *cheder* has dissolved, and a large one gathered on the opposite side of the way. Now the street is so full that it is possible to pass through the groups without attracting attention. One red-haired Jew with a face scarred

by disease, and a long, ragged beard, a little older than his companions, is evidently waging war with a young man in European dress. But the rest of the group hustle him away, and, still talking angrily, he disappears into the doorway of a neighbouring house. A few yards further on, a group of young girls employed in an artificial flower factory—to judge by their headgear—are listening to a youth with a black slouched hat and a dark handkerchief drawn high under his chin. The air is too heavy to be borne. The stranger turns into the Dzika, where the crowds are thinner, and thence into the silence of the neighbouring streets. He has witnessed a meeting of the so-called "workman's exchange," where agitators hold forth on Tuesdays and Saturdays to the Jewish proletariat. Here strikes are organised, meetings planned, proclamations distributed, and the conditions of the factory hands discussed. Here new converts are made to the ghetto-revival and old ones given their work. Here a whispered word means a death sentence to an unpopular policeman or a bomb for a government official. Here the revolution gathers its adherents, passes the news of to-day, the plans for to-morrow, points out the line of action to be pursued with this master or that employer, the delinquents to be pardoned, the lives to be sacrificed. Here is the political school of the ghetto, where boys and girls learn the power of the revolver and the use of the bomb. Here all the revolutionary propaganda and business takes place in broad daylight and in the

middle of the street. Within a stone's throw the trams pass to and from the centre of the town, and the ramparts of the fortress rise above the flatness of the fields. At the very street corners sentries are posted, and yet, when the rigour of martial law was at its strongest and people were searched in the streets, the workman's exchange managed to exist. Patrols pushed their way through the throng, but there was always a moment for a whispered word or a rapid order. Policemen carefully avoid the spot, and little wonder, for Jewish enterprise has armed its proletariat, and it would be courting death to show the black and orange uniform of the force in that thoroughfare. For the agitator it is a most convenient place. No ordinary intruder can understand what is going on. The meetings do away with the need of a great deal of writing. The Jews, ever addicted to doing their business in the open air, go there readily. Orators are always sure of an audience. Many a factory hand, who would not run the risk of attending an indoor meeting, goes there to hear what new actions are afoot. Here, too, gather those birds of prey, the callous products of revolution and minions of anarchy, who will murder a man for a song or the mere pleasure of the deed; the men who will set fire to a spirit shop for the sake of the *vodka,* and kill a policeman for the sake of a revolver wherewith to perpetrate other acts of violence. Here, in a word, is the quarry of the Socialist agitator, who thinks to carve the road to a political Utopia through the bodies of his fellow-creatures, the

happy hunting-ground for the All-Jewish Labour League of Russia, Lithuania and Poland, popularly known as the "Bund."

The Bund came to Poland from Lithuania in the year 1900. The soil was well prepared to receive it, for signs of a political revival, engendered by the desire to assert Jewish nationalism, had already made their appearance. Its programme includes the overthrow of Tsardom and the establishment of a democratic government; the convocation of a national assembly based upon universal direct and secret voting; amnesty for all political prisoners, the abolition of capital punishment, the nationalisation of the land, etc., etc. So far this programme is identical with that of another revolutionary party, the Social Democratic League. But there is a clause dealing with the Jewish question. The Bund strives to establish a central autonomy for the children of the ghetto, to remove the civil disabilities which oppress them and to give them the same rights as the rest of the community. It does not aim at assimilating them with the Polish community. True, if a Jewish workman wishes to learn Polish in order to enable him to compete with a Polish rival, the intellectual members of the party, those whose education has caused them to absorb a certain amount of Polish culture, will help him by lessons to obtain this end. Incidentally, too, the Bund tends to draw the Jewish proletariat away from the superstitions of Judæa; a man who believes in the precepts of modern Socialism can scarcely retain

all his respect for Talmudic and Rabbinistic lore. But at the same time the Bund does not laugh at Yiddish, far from it; it does all in its power by translating Socialistic literature to raise its cultural and political value. It publishes Yiddish pamphlets from English, French and German originals, establishes Socialist newspapers which tell the Jew, who would not hear of it otherwise, how the working classes live in other lands; tell him of trades-unions and libraries, of reading-rooms and lectures, of free medical advice and short working hours. Instead of preaching, like the Sionists, the necessity of emigration to the Land of Promise, it says, "Stay where you are and work out your own salvation. When autocracy falls, we shall have a vast amount of political influence. The Jew will no longer be the Pariah of society: he will be able to assert his own individuality. Keep to your Yiddish. Let the Poles and half-assimilated Jews sneer at the jargon, calling it the tongue of the Talmud and of darkness, we will make it the means of your intellectual development and of your political freedom. Read our books and papers written in your mother tongue, and you will learn of things which have passed and are passing in the outside world without losing your individuality or sacrificing one jot of your racial pride. You will learn of despotism overthrown by the masses, of revolutions achieved and proletariats victorious. Join us and we will do the rest." The immediate goal of the Bundist is the overthrow of the Tsardom. He employs two

general means towards that end—strikes and the conversion of the Tsar's military and naval forces to the tenets of Socialism.

STRIKES

Strikes as organised by the Bund are of two kinds—isolated and universal. Isolated strikes are always occurring, and are frequently organised in conjunction with the Polish Party of Socialists and the Social Democratic League. One month there will be a strike of bakers, when those who are caught baking bread are punished by having naphtha mixed with their dough. When the journeymen bakers have wrung some new concessions from their masters, the butchers will undergo the same process, with the same ruination of the meat. Then the attention of the agitators will be directed towards the master tailors. In the spring of 1906, when people who had spent the winter abroad to escape the consequences of the prevailing anarchy, returned to Poland and the master tailors were besieged with orders from the Polish shops, their journeymen went on strike, presenting them with the following conditions drawn up by the Bund, the Social Democrats, and the Polish Party of Socialists :—

(1) Home work must be abolished and work-rooms provided by the masters.

(2) The masters are not to employ hands without the consent of the (strikes) committee.

(3) Payment by the piece is to be abolished.

(4) A 9-hours' working day is to be established.

(5) Independent hands to be paid at least three roubles per day, and assistants one rouble.

(6) When work is slack to cut down the working days for all alike: not to dismiss the bad workers and keep the good ones.

(7) To have hygienic work-rooms.

(8) Not to dismiss for strikes.

(9) To pay for time lost during strikes.

At first the master tailors refused to accept such conditions, affirming that they were not in a position to pay two roubles a day, let alone concede to the other demands. Many preferred to raise the price of their own produce, and accepted clauses 3, 4, 5 and 6, rejecting the others. It is impossible for a tailor who takes work from some shop and has to live in one room with his family to open a work-room for the convenience of his men, and equally impossible for him to pay for "strike time" when he himself is brought to the verge of starvation with every lock-out. As to consenting to consult the wishes of "delegates" before dismissing a refractory hand or employing a new one, many masters expressed their opinion that it was better to give up business altogether and live the best way they could rather than submit to the terrorism of their men. When it became apparent that the masters did not intend to give in, bands of strikers entered their rooms and spoilt the materials by cutting them up into small pieces, or,

when there was too much for that, pouring vitriol and naphtha over them. These agitators are always armed with revolvers, which they do not hesitate to use as soon as they meet with resistance. The following instance is a fair example of the way in which those whom the police arrest are avenged by their comrades. A master boot-maker had called in the assistance of the police when his men entered his house and ruined ten pounds' worth of leather by cutting some of it into small pieces and pouring iodoform over the rest. The men were arrested, but the next morning two of their friends entered the master's rooms and fired several shots from their revolvers. The master, though wounded, strove to save himself by jumping out of the window into the court-yard, where he fell, exhausted by loss of blood. The sight of their victim, writhing in the agony of death, instead of moving the ruffians to pity, only served to enrage them the more. They both stood at the open window and fired shot after shot at their unfortunate master until their bullets were exhausted, when they left the house as coolly as they had entered it. This kind of crime has grown too common in Poland to excite any wonder. Men are murdered in broad daylight in their own houses, surrounded by their wives and children, because they must earn bread for themselves and families and cannot afford to accede to the extravagant demands of those who pull the strings of the revolutionary movement. Very often the workmen themselves are not anxious to strike, but the agitators

find means of compelling them to do so. In several Jewish mills in Lodz, when the men said they were satisfied with the wages, the agitators removed indispensable parts of the machinery, thus forcing a lock-out.

The butchers' strike (June 1906) in Lodz led to fighting in the streets. The butchers, finding it impossible to accede to their employés' new demands without raising the price of meat, did so. The result was that the working classes, who could not afford to pay a high price when times were so bad, boycotted the butchers' shops. Crowds, headed by women, fell upon people as they returned from marketing, ransacked their baskets and poured naphtha upon all the meat they found. Those who had spent their money upon beef and mutton naturally objected to this procedure and both sides fought lustily. When the patrols interfered they were fired upon. Some butchers shut their shops, others paid for their temerity by losing their meat, which was ruined by the inevitable naphtha or iodoform; a few were guarded by the military, though these last generally saw their shop windows broken before many days had passed. One evening a large crowd began to storm the shops of the less popular butchers: when the military arrived, the crowd fired at them. In many cases prisoners arrested during similar disturbances are let off after a day or two, as the prisons cannot afford accommodation for the hundreds that are taken there.

These small and intermittent strikes serve two purposes. They gain adherents in a large class of men who have

no objection to being paid for "strike time" and working under improved conditions, and they give the men an opportunity of becoming accustomed to the idea of frequent lock-outs, so that the masses, remembering past benefits, are ready to fall in with the plans of the Strikes Committee and take part in an universal lock-out when the opportunity occurs.

A young Jewish agitator—a member of one of the Bund committees—frequented the dyeing-sheds of a large carpet factory at Warsaw, holding meetings during the dinner hour and inciting the men to strike for higher wages and the dismissal of some foremen, who were to be replaced by those of their own choice.

The owner of the factory sent for the agitator at last and asked him how much he earned.

"Thirty roubles a month in an office, and I have had a university education," was the reply.

"Do you know," the manufacturer asked, "that each of the men you are persuading to strike earns at least twice as much as you?" and he showed the books to verify his statement.

"I don't doubt it," said the agitator. "It is nothing to us how much you pay your men; we don't care a jot if they are happy or not. We want to organise another universal strike. It is the only way of doing it."[1]

These dinner-hour meetings have become such a feature of the Polish factories and workshops that no employer ventures to raise any objection to them.

[1] This conversation took place in June 1906.

Very often the Bund, the Social Democrats and the Polish Party of Socialists all send delegates who do not agree with each other. The Bund and the Social Democrats are apt to join forces against the Polish Party of Socialists.

During the week which ends as I am writing this (June 16, 1906) no less than fifty meetings of this kind were held in the Warsaw factories alone. Six thousand workmen took part in them. Only twelve were attended by delegates of the Polish Party of Socialists, the remainder being run by the Bund and the Social Democrats.

When a political crisis occurs and the Bund thinks that the days of autocracy are numbered, it does its best to organise a universal strike, counting upon the economical ruin of the country. I suppose it will be allowed that that of October—November 1905 partially succeeded, for it half ruined the country, brought the Jewish and non-Jewish proletariat to the verge of starvation, and drove all those who had any money to spend across the frontier. The attempt of December 1905 was a complete failure, in spite of urgent proclamations calling upon the proletariat to join hands in one last struggle. (All revolutionary proclamations promise that the demonstration they urge will be the "last struggle.") The Bundists admit to-day that the masses were too exhausted morally and physically with the efforts of the autumnal disturbances and the privations endured during the early part of the winter to respond to

the call. Those who had work were glad to keep it and give a part of their earnings to their less fortunate comrades. As it was, thousands had to beg in the streets, and many, impelled by hunger and unable to resist the temptation of obtaining by force that which they could not earn, used their revolvers against the rest of the community and went in bands to "hold up" shops and offices.

Very few mills or factories were working more than three days a week; the miners' lock-out and the railway strike had resulted in a coal famine; the price of coal was exorbitant, bread dear and meat beyond the means of the working classes. They learnt the bitter lesson that an economical crisis, even when caused by strikes organised by "the friends of the people," affect these people more than anybody else.

Another attempt was made when the Tsar dissolved the Duma in July 1906, but this time the Socialists, who did not expect Russia's first parliament to come to such an abrupt end, were unprepared and in want of funds. The date of the general strike was therefore postponed from week to week and finally fixed for the middle of August.[1]

These strikes have caused many factories to be closed, men thrown out of work have lowered the standard of Polish produce and driven a large amount of trade

[1] By this time the most important leaders were either in prison or over the frontier; the idea of the strike was therefore postponed indefinitely.

from the country. The total output of the Lodz factories *alone* for 1905 was worth 19,195,484 roubles, or 1,384,665 roubles less than the preceding year. Poland's best market was the Far East. She sent thousands of bales of cotton and woollen goods to Charbin, Chabarovsk and Vladivostok. Owing to the frequent strikes, Lodz was not in a position to execute more than a small fraction of the orders received for the spring and summer of the present year (1906). Their warehouses were exhausted and the balance of the orders was placed with Moscow firms who had hitherto been unable to compete with the Polish centres. At about the same time the Vistula Railway Company sent their agent to Warsaw to contract for new uniforms. The contract covered a sum of £60,000, but the tailors' strike was at its height and the order was placed in Russia. The same company required 30,000 ells of Polish linen, but the country could not produce so much, because the stock had been exhausted. How many families, who are now destitute, could have been supported by the money to be earned upon this one contract!

The cheap ready-made boot trade, which, as has already been stated, is in the hands of the Jews, has also suffered severely through the strikes. A large Moscow firm which supplied the Warsaw boot-makers with annual orders worth several thousand roubles, finding it impossible to get them executed in Poland during the year 1905, transferred their custom to Lithuania. A master boot-maker of Minsk was "bombed" for executing

orders for a Russian dealer who had hitherto gone to Poland, but the outrage failed to bring the trade back again.

The shopkeepers have learned to import German goods. Now that the prices of home-made articles have gone up, the foreign ones are nearly as cheap and better in quality.

Those who supply the wealthy classes with clothes find that the number of their customers is rapidly diminishing: anarchy reigns in their work-rooms, and the foremen and forewomen dare not insist upon bad work being altered because threatening letters would drive them from their situations. Too many of their class have been wounded or killed for disregarding such warnings.

PROPAGANDA

The weak point about all the revolutionary undertakings in Russia is the attitude of the military, who not only refuse to fight for the people, but, in spite of all efforts to organise mutinies, show a considerable amount of respect for their officers and a predilection for *vodka*, which invariably turns a political demonstration into a drunken orgy from which they awake very penitent and docile. Many speculations have been made by revolutionary philosophers upon this feature, and the Bundists at any rate are hopeful of curing this trait in the "broad-natured Russian" by organising as many

small mutinies as possible.[1] Whether they will succeed in doing so remains to be seen, and as they themselves allow a term of from 5 to 7 years before expecting any great results, the world will probably wait a good deal longer before the average Russian soldier grows careful of anything when drunk or fails to repent of his misdeeds when sober. Perhaps it is the more difficult for the Jews, an abstemious and careful people, to realise how broad the Sclavonic nature is. Should their officers decide to cast in their lot with the people against autocracy, there is little doubt that the soldiers would obey them. But this is not what the Bund aims at: the Bund wants to stir up strife between officer and private, and has organised a system of propaganda amongst the Tsar's military and naval forces with this end in view.

Propaganda is carried on (1) by Jewish factors who obtain entrance into all the garrisons and fortresses, (2) by Jews serving in the army or navy.

It must be remembered that the Russian sailor spends much more of his time on land than the blue-jacket, and that when there he lives in barracks. Factors, therefore, have almost as much access to him as to the soldiers. From time to time he can distribute leaflets calling upon them not to shoot their brethren but their officers. There is a great amount of risk in such propaganda: for

[1] The recent mutiny in the Preobrajienski regiment was organised by the Jews, who served as bandsmen. The regimental bands in the Russian army are largely composed of Jews.

the Russian soldier or sailor is very anti-Semitic, and often denounces the agitator or arrests him. Cases have occurred in which soldiers have shot them on the spot for distributing revolutionary proclamations in the barracks. It not unfrequently happens that agitators, after inciting the men to strike for higher pay and better rations, are turned out by their auditors as soon as they begin to talk about politics. The Jewish soldier has a far better chance of success. He knows the conditions under which his comrades live, and marks the shortcomings of his superiors. He does not tell the raw recruit—and this class forms the hope of the revolutionary propagandist—that the Tsar is a bad ruler, a despot, a man who ought not to be obeyed, who orders brother to fire upon brother and son upon father. He knows that the average soldier has a vague but reverent idea of his Imperial master. He does not always even tell him to turn against the colonel of the regiment, who is an awful and mysterious personage, with unbounded authority. The Jewish soldier tells his comrade to mutiny against the subaltern officer who makes money on his rations, swears at his awkwardness and marches out into the streets with him when disturbances are afoot. This appeals to him because he knows every tone of his subaltern's voice and is probably familiar with the touch of his fist when applied in anger upon his body. The soldier will therefore listen to a comrade better than to a factor. Often he will argue that as the man is a Jew he cannot be giving him good advice :

but though a Jew he is a comrade, and therefore deserving of some sort of consideration. Not long ago I was talking to a prominent Bundist about the Russian soldier, and said that neither they nor any other revolutionary parties had yet succeeded in organising a mutiny which has proved really dangerous to the Government. While admitting the truth of my remark, he said that even in Poland, where the soldier was especially hostile to the civil population, and where his natural antipathy was sharpened by long hours of patrol and sentry duty, insubordination in the army was on the increase. Of course the military authorities deny this, and it is very difficult to get at the truth because they have an excellent way of keeping their domestic troubles to themselves. But if the nature of sentences passed upon men accused of propagating revolutionary doctrines in the army is in proportion to the apprehension with which they are regarded, the courts-martial evidently look upon such men as dangerous. Here are two instances, one concerning a Jew, the other a Russian.

A., a Jew, and B., a Russian, both soldiers belonging to the fortress of Warsaw, were brought up before the court-martial of the fortress upon a charge of propagating revolutionary ideas amongst their comrades. The Jew was arrested upon the evidence of a soldier from another regiment, who said he had heard him tell his comrades that it was murderous to shoot down one's own brothers, and that the officers who gave such an order should be shot by their own men. The witness,

who happened to be doing patrol duty in the town, was not present at the trial, and his written statement was taken as evidence. The Jew was sentenced to exile in Siberia for life.

B., a fair-haired, open-faced Russian, was a man of greater intelligence than most of his class. He used to read literature with which the officers, let alone the men, in a Russian regiment are rarely familiar, translations of John Stuart Mill's books, Spencer's Education, etc. He was heard to observe that the autocratic form of government was bad, and that the time was not far distant when Russia would exchange it for a constitutional one. When arrested he refused to accept the services of a lawyer, which are allowed to those who desire them. The barrister who defended the Jew was taken into the Russian's cell, and explained that though it was not possible for him to be acquitted from the charge, legal advice might do some good. "I want no legal advice," the soldier replied. "In Japan the soldiers are encouraged to read and think for themselves. The Russian government wants cattle, and not men; that is why it is falling to pieces." He was exiled to Siberia for life.[1]

An escape was effected in June last from one of the large prisons, which points to the possibility of connivance

[1] Towards the autumn of 1906 there has been a marked tendency towards giving shorter sentences for revolutionary propaganda This is owing to the terrorism and the assassinations of military men known for their severity when sitting on courts-martial.

on the part of the sentries. S, a Jew and civilian, was arrested upon a charge of distributing revolutionary literature. Pending his trial he was sent to the criminal prison, and whilst in the exercise yard with other prisoners the latter helped him to escape by hoisting him over the wall. This was in the presence of armed sentries who always escorted the prisoners.

Revolutionary propaganda amongst civilians is much less severely punished. I have records before me of trials in which men accused thereof are sentenced to from three to twelve months' imprisonment and two years' exile beyond the Russian frontiers.

But the Bund is not forgetful of the benefits of propaganda at home. The reader has seen how in large towns like Warsaw a great deal is done in the streets by means of the "workmen's exchange." The agitators also enter the factories where Jews are employed and speak to them in the dinner hour. The work is easy in the large manufacturing centres, where practically the whole of the Jewish proletariat belong to the Bund. In the smaller towns and Jewish settlements its propaganda is making steady headway. Branch committees are formed, consisting sometimes of no more than one or two members, who work among the people, lending Yiddish pamphlets and newspapers, and holding meetings in which the speakers do their best to persuade the Jewish masses that they are slaves to the Poles, and the only way in which they can become free is to join the Bund.

The propaganda of the Bund amongst the Jewish

bourgeoisie has not yet met with any very promising results, although the children of the small shop-keeping class are very often members of one of the Socialistic parties.

Generally speaking, its activity is confined to the younger generation of the Jewish proletariat; though its ranks are not, like those of the Social-Sionists, filled by mere boys and girls, men of middle age are rarely to be met with. The fact is that the two generations are not in a position to understand one another. The parents—men who have either partially assimilated with the Polish community, as the Jewish intellectuals, or clung to the prejudice of the synagogue, as the masses—do not understand the revival which has manifested itself so conspicuously during the past five years. The children retort that their fathers were young in different times, and that the wave of revolution which is sweeping over Russia is the only hope for the civil emancipation of the Jews. This thought is the keynote to all the Bund's propaganda, and has appealed not only to the youth of the ghetto but to many Israelites who have been reared outside its walls.

THE ARMING OF THE BUND

But the Bund is not content with persuading the soldier to fight for the proletariat; it has taught the proletariat to fight against the soldier so long as he refuses to listen to its call and rise against autocracy.

The leaders of the movement soon realised that the physical cowardice which characterises the Polish Jew was a great drawback to the success of an enterprise which required courage and daring. "A defenceless man," they argued, "cannot confront an armed soldier." So they promptly organised what they call "fighting groups," consisting of armed men who stand on the outskirts of such gatherings as the "workmen's exchange," and protect those who are not armed from the attacks of passing patrols. At the same time it encourages all open-air gatherings as tending to accustom the Jewish proletariat to danger and the use of firearms. This systematic arming was first introduced by the Bund, and upon the Bund the responsibility of placing firearms in the hands of the proletariat rests. Wherever their organisation has established a sub-committee, in every factory and workshop into which it has gained an entrance, its adherents are supplied with revolvers of the Browning system, and taught how to use them. Those who can afford to pay are supposed to do so, but the poorer ones receive them for nothing. The Patriots of the National Democrat League bought their first stock of revolvers from the Jewish organisation. Nearly all the revolvers in the possession of the Bund—and the sum total amounts to several thousands—were brought into the country without the knowledge of the customs authorities. The rest, a far smaller number, were stolen. The Jews have ever been the smugglers in Poland. From time immemorial they have brought things over

the frontier without contributing to the revenue. There is nothing, from a French clock to a forbidden newspaper, that they will not produce at prices which—to use a commercial expression—compare favourably with those of home-made goods.

Hundreds of Jews earn a living in this way, passing their time about the frontier stations of Poland-Austria-Germany. But the wealth of more than one respected and prosperous Jewish firm has been built up by a system of smuggling. Let us take the instance of Messrs. A. and B., pianoforte and musical instrument makers, the first firm of the kind in the country. The two partners, both Jews, grew rich rapidly, and the uninitiated Pole wondered at the money-making qualities of imported pianos. One day the customs-house officers happened to open one of the pianos which were being imported from Berlin by Messrs. A. and B., and found large quantities of lace, watches, and other trinkets inside the walnut case. Enquiries were made which resulted in the discovery that this smuggling had been going on for years. The two partners met to consider the dilemma, and agreed to draw lots as to who should take the blame for the whole thing. The lot fell to A. He underwent his trial, exonerated his partner from all knowledge of this systematic smuggling, was sentenced, and blew his brains out. B. carried on the business, which is still the most profitable one of its kind in the country, and does his best to help talented young musicians to make their way in the world.

If musical-instrument makers were able to bring other things than "Steinways" and "Erards" into the country, it was not more difficult for the Bund to introduce revolvers. The only difference was that the revolutionaries substituted coal-trucks for piano-cases. Large quantities of coal are imported into Poland from Germany. Much of it is conveyed in covered trucks. The Bund sent agents to the German capital to buy revolvers and to come to an understanding with those agents who supply coal to the Polish capital. A few weeks later large quantities of revolvers were secreted—amongst a small quantity of coal, which was duly unloaded by the agent's men at the Warsaw terminus. This went on for some time, until it dawned upon the minds of certain officials that it was a strange thing that outrages in which revolvers played an important part should be steadily increasing in Poland at a time when the gunsmiths' shops were closed by order and their stores safely locked up in the nearest fortress. This phenomenon was commented upon for a few weeks in official circles, until some fresh outrage, more daring than preceding ones, gave one *tchinovnik* the brilliant idea of searching the goods trains. Among some covered coal-trucks, revolvers of the Browning system were found. Of course, nobody, even the merchant who imported the coal, knew anything about it. But the authorities, who are so fond of shutting the stable door when the horse has disappeared, stopped the importation of coal for several weeks, thus adding to the coal famine which was then making itself

unpleasantly felt.[1] But the Bund had already obtained a large supply of firearms, and if the government was against the importation of coal, they had nothing to object to in foreign bedsteads, which, if carefully packed, could evade the vigilance of a customs-house officer, whose sight had been partially impaired by bribes. But there was another means of obtaining revolvers which were already in the country, and that was from the policemen.

The police-force in Poland was formerly supplied with shoddy revolvers of an extraordinary pattern, which always went off when they were not wanted to, and always refused to do so when they were. Those in Warsaw were especially bad. The town was not altogether to blame for this, as it paid a good price. But the cavalry officer who undertook to execute the order had been rather too anxious about his profit in the transaction, and the consequence was that a policeman when attacked was as good as defenceless, because his revolver refused to go off. "The Bund has Brownings," said the authorities when the daily assassination or wounding of a policeman warned them that the ranks of the force were being sadly thinned, and men could not be found to fill the vacancies, "we must buy Brownings too," and the police force was supplied with Brownings. But the Bund did not approve of this imitation, though it might be the sincerest form of

[1] Lately, revolvers have been imported in packing-cases supposed to contain sugar.

flattery, and began to take the new arms away. At two o'clock in the morning, when the streets are deserted and dark, a band of three or four men approach a policeman who stands shivering at his post, pin him to the ground, gag him, and, after taking his coveted firearm, make off in the darkness. This went on for some weeks (during the winter of 1905–1906), one or two policemen lost their lives in the struggle, and policemen were ordered to stand together in pairs at night. This means was found ineffectual, for eight men came in place of the four, and carried off two revolvers instead of one. Then two soldiers were allowed for the protection of each policeman, and when the nights became shorter, this form of terrorism gave way to others, and it became the fashion to shoot the policeman. The favourite way of doing this is to watch for him as he goes to or from his beat in a tram, jump upon the foot-board, fire at him several times, and get into a cab before the astonished onlookers know what has happened. Others are shot at their posts, in spite of the two sentries who stand near. The explanation is that all three, after standing for a few hours, doze at their posts and fail to see the approaching assassins. The fact that there are still men willing to risk being shot like this for a mere twenty-four shillings a month, proves how hard it is to get an honest living in Poland just now.

But the Bund needs something more than revolvers. Its programme includes the use of the bomb when political enemies are to be "removed," and though sardine-

boxes are easy to get, and deadly fluids can be bought in the chemists' shops, dynamite often has to be stolen from the factories where it is used, or, failing that, from the government stores and arsenals. This is done with great ingenuity.

The Kieff incident, which occurred during the winter of 1905–6, will illustrate the way this is done.

On a certain day a man, dressed in the uniform of the civil service, presented himself at the office attached to the arsenal upon some business in connection with the routine of the establishment. He was left alone for a few minutes, and, as the official he particularly wished to see had gone out, was asked to call again next day. He represented himself as coming from the town of X, and there were no reasons to disbelieve him. He did not call, and his existence was almost forgotten until a few days later, when one of the clerks was surprised to see a permit returned from the stores. Nobody had applied for it, and no orders to give out ammunition had been received. His eyes wandered to the place on the wall where the keys of the stores were usually kept. They were not there. His suspicions were aroused, and he began to count the seals which are affixed to the passes—one was missing. He made enquiries about the pass at the stores. The sentries there said it had been presented that morning by two men dressed in bombardiers' uniforms, who drove up to the arsenal in a regulation cart. One of them stayed in the cart whilst the other opened one of the storehouses, took out a

quantity of dynamite and ammunition, locked up again, loaded the cart and went off. Enquiries were made at X which resulted in the discovery that the stranger who had been at the office was entirely unknown there. He had stolen the keys and seals, and sent his accomplices to take the dynamite. Where an artifice fails, more energetic means are adopted. More than once the coal mines in the district of Dombrowa have been the scenes of raids in which the watchmen who guard the sheds where explosives are stored were overpowered, and large quantities of dynamite stolen. But perhaps the coolest way of obtaining arms and ammunition occurred on the premises of a gunsmith's at Warsaw, when a band of Jews entered the shop in broad daylight and, whilst some asked to look at the weapons, the rest held up the astonished staff until the bogus customers had helped themselves. They then walked out shooting, and disappeared long before their victims sufficiently regained their presence of mind to give the alarm.

PUNISHMENT

Before considering the effect of this arming of the proletariat, it may interest the reader to learn how those who disarm policemen, raid shops, make or throw bombs and carry on revolutionary propaganda among the military are treated when they fall into the hands of the police.

When a man or woman is arrested he or she is con-

veyed to the examination prison, in order that the police may make out a case against the accused before the trial. The methods there used, though contrary to British ideas of justice, save the police a great deal of trouble because, being "morally convinced" of the prisoners' guilt, they do all in their power to make them confess it. "The quicker they confess, the better it is for them," a man connected with this court is fond of saying. "We don't want to keep them with us longer than we can help, for the prisons are overcrowded as it is. If they are so pig-headed, they must put up with it." In an earlier chapter I have cited a case which throws some light upon the way in which such prisoners are "persuaded" to give evidence against others. Very nearly the same means are employed when persuasion is used in connection with the guilty one himself. Beating is resorted to in most cases. A docile prisoner is often brought to confess his guilt, real or imaginary, after being flogged with long rubber whips, which leave few marks but give terrible pain. More obstinate ones are subjected to a process which is nothing short of torture. After being bound down on their stomachs, a small piece of wood is placed upon their vertebra, near the base, and beaten with a hammer. Two lads of fourteen were arrested somewhere in the provinces upon the charge of shooting a policeman. They were taken to the investigation prison and beaten with the indiarubber whips just referred to, but as they protested their innocence, the soles of their feet were beaten with bull-whips

(whangees). Most prisoners are agreed that the pain thus inflicted is the worst of any which the ingenuity of the police has yet discovered. In the present case the agony was so great that the lads confessed their guilt and were sent to the Warsaw citadel for trial. A barrister heard of their case and investigated it. Both boys were innocent of anything worse than being in the crowd when the assassination took place, and were liberated after being imprisoned for some months pending the investigation.

It is not an uncommon thing for prisoners brought up for trial to emerge from their examination department with broken noses, maimed ears, etc. At present, as soon as their examination is completed, political offenders are brought up before a court-martial. They are allowed to call in a barrister to plead their case, but this concession is merely a matter of form, as the "investigation" process has furnished as much evidence as the court requires. Sometimes, it is true, a very young offender—and there are many offenders below twenty years of age—may manage to get a sentence of death modified into that of perpetual exile. But when martial law is in force, capital punishment is legal for so many political offenders that such commutation is difficult to obtain, and the burial-grounds of the political prisoners are overcrowded. Condemned to death, a prisoner, whether he be Jew or Gentile, a Bundist or a Social Democrat, or an anarchist generally, strives to be shot instead of hanged. Not only is death by shooting more

dignified, but the agony is over much sooner. In the fortress of Warsaw, at least, the duty of hangman used to be performed by a professional. His services have now been disposed of, and his place is supplied by amateurs who apply for the job *incognito*. These men are the lowest specimens of humanity, drawn from the scum of the slums of the city, where condemned thieves, knifers, and that army of ruffians who will hire themselves out for murder when they find somebody ready to give them a few roubles for doing it. Those who succeed in being hired for hanging political prisoners are paid about £2 10*s.* 0*d.* per head, or rather per neck. On the morning of the day appointed for the execution, the condemned man is asked whether he wishes to make his peace with God. If he answers in the affirmative, a regimental chaplain is conducted to his cell. After the religious ceremony is over, he is dressed in a long linen cloak, the hood of which is drawn down over his eyes, and led to the gallows, and up a short set of movable steps leading to them. Then the amateur hangman slings the noose round his neck, tightens it, and jumping off the steps, pushes them away from under the condemned man's feet. The death agony is supposed to last ten minutes, but the authorities in the Warsaw citadel allow half-an-hour. At the end of that time a surgeon pronounces life extinct, the body is taken down by soldiers and buried, coffinless, in the adjoining burial-ground. Those who are shot are led out into the execution ground blindfolded and tied to stakes. At

a word of command given by an officer the soldiers who are told off to perform the execution fire a volley and all is over. Their bodies are buried in coffins.

Not long ago, that is at the beginning of the year 1906, a large bomb factory was discovered by a military patrol in the Jewish quarter. Several people were caught red-handed. They were arrested and taken to the citadel. Two young Jewesses were among the number and, after the court-martial had passed a sentence of death upon the men, the authorities sent to St. Petersburg to intercede for the Jewesses, in the hope that their sentences might be commuted to imprisonment for life. The governor of the fortress took up the case, and finally an answer was obtained to the effect that if the two Jewesses would promise to have no further connection with the Bund or any other revolutionary party, they would be imprisoned for some time and then obtain a free pardon from the Tsar. The official who repeated this message did not doubt that such young girls—they were not more than nineteen years of age—would agree to take the required oath. But to his surprise they quietly but firmly refused to do so, adding that they would not under any consideration whatever make a promise they did not intend to keep. Should they ever regain their liberty, they would, they declared, work harder than ever in the cause of freedom. Their comrades had already paid the last penalty the law could impose upon them, and they were prepared to do the same. They were allowed

a few days in which to reconsider their decision, but as they remained firm, were shot in the precincts of the fortress of Warsaw. Yet these were girls who had not hesitated to prepare the most deadly and at the same time unjust instruments terrorism has yet conceived, for scarcely a bomb is thrown which does not injure or kill innocent victims. These were girls who had signed the death sentences of those whose political opinions were at variance with their own, who had made innocent children fatherless and homes desolate. But theirs is not an isolated case of idealism. The Russian prisons are filled with Jews and Jewesses who, having sworn to sacrifice their lives for the cause of the Bund, are prepared to suffer all things rather than deviate one whit from their intentions.

What is the secret of the Bund's power? How is it that during the five and a half years it has been on Polish soil, it has become an indispensable feature of ghetto life and is gaining adherents in provincial settlements where, before its advent, the Jewish population had the same aims and sentiments as their forefathers? True, there are still remote spots, untouched by the railway, which have not yet come under its influence, and where the most brotherly feeling still exists between the Jews and the Poles. Even to-day in some parts of the remote government of Lublin, when the Roman Catholic Bishop makes a progress through his diocese and passes near the Jewish settlements, the inhabitants still run out to meet him, presenting him with bread

and salt and greeting him with "*Niech Zyje Polska*" (Long live Poland). But these cases are rapidly growing rarer, and in the large towns the Jewish proletariat takes no pains to hide its hostility. It is striving to assert its individuality, and woe betide those who cross its purpose. Every month marks the success of new propaganda, every month the Bund establishes a new sub-committee in some town or village, spreading its doctrines amongst the Jewish population. How is it that whilst the Sionist has found that his propaganda is looked upon with hostility, the Bundist makes converts daily? It is because the Sionist strives to open the doors of the ghetto with his European civilisation, with his talk of emigrant ships and capitalists and factories, whilst the Bundist appeals to and through all that the children of the ghetto hold dear, to the latent ambitions and anti-Christianism of the Jewish masses, and through the Yiddish they have heard ever since they could remember. This is the key which has opened the door. This is why the Bund has succeeded in attracting the Jewish proletariat when other revolutionaries, the Social Democrats, the Polish Socialists and the Proletariat failed. When Bundism first came into Poland it found young men and women belonging to the Jewish intellectual class, which had half assimilated with the Polish community, adopted its language, its culture, often even its politics, eager to learn Yiddish to arrest the process of assimilation, and go amongst the Jewish masses as the Russian youth of the seventies went among the liberated

serfs. In a word, the Bund came just at the right time, just when the young generation was afire with the wish to do something for its kin. At first they had no easy task. They were confronted with much of that hostility the Sionist meets to-day. The children of the ghetto mistrusted those of their race who had cast aside the *halat*, spoke Yiddish with difficulty, and had broken away from the thousand and one superstitions which enslave the orthodox Jew. In those early days the agitators were glad if they could effect an entrance in a small sweating shop, and persuade two or three journeymen tailors to listen to them. But soon their work grew easier: for it was a miserable audience they addressed, too numbed and indifferent to realise the depths of its own misery, but sensible of the note of sympathy which ran through the agitators' halting speech. The very substance of these harangues was a lesson to the political propagandists. They did not talk of the theories of Marx and Engel, as too many Social Democrats are used to do. They did not speak of overthrowing autocracy and creating those free units to which the drawing-room agitator, who pleads the cause of a people he has never seen, delights to refer. What does the Jew in the sweating shop care for autocracy? He has never seen the Tsar; he has—or had, at that time, at any rate—the vaguest ideas about the Russian Empire, nay, of that small portion of it which immediately surrounds him. Marx, Engels and the Tsar were all one to him, for they were but empty

names conveying as much meaning to his mind as a quotation from one of the plays of Shakespeare. But he did know what it meant to work for sixteen hours a day in a fœtid room; he did know what it meant to live upon half a herring and a slice of bread a day; he did know what it was to be in want even of that poor fare when times were bad and the long winter froze the blood in his veins. He knew, too, that other men who lived in streets beyond his own had good food, clothes and houses. He knew, too, that the Poles upon whom he existed, for whom he worked, no matter how poor they were, had more comforts than he, that they had other rights, other and brighter lives. And when the agitators told him that these comforts were the result of his toil, wrung from the ghetto slaves who had only to believe in themselves to be free, he felt that after all the strangers must be right. And when he was told that his employer was dependent upon his labour, that when the man refused to work, the master was ruined, the seeds were sown for strikes, for he did not pause to think that a bankrupt master means a starving man. Then, when Yiddish translations of the more popular kind of revolutionary literature made their way into the ghetto, when lectures explained the position of the proletariat and newspapers reported labour strikes in other parts of the world, the mental range of the Jewish proletariat widened. His natural intelligence, cramped for centuries by Talmudic doctrines and confined to the details of barter, rapidly expanded. He beheld

himself objectively, compared himself with others, and came to the conclusion that he too had a right to live, to assert his own nationality, and to educate himself, not by assimilating with the Polish community, but by adopting what the Bund thought best and most necessary from the culture of other nations. This is the argument of the more enlightened Bundists. But their propaganda is always bringing in new converts, steeped in the superstition of the ghetto, to whom the agitators appeal to-day as they appealed five years ago. The leaders alone have the goal clearly in view: the rank and file are content to strike for the amelioration of the moment. If they pour vitriol over the cloth and leather of the strike-breakers and shoot the masters who refuse to stop work, they do it, not because they believe that the action will hasten the fall of autocracy, but because they are eager to earn a few more copecks a day, or wring money they have not earned from the man who employs them. If they insist that the good and bad workman should be paid alike, it is not because they have any logical objection to the survival of the fittest; but because they hate fair competition, and are too indolent to try to bring their work up to a given standard.

THE BUND'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the day the Bund first entered the Kingdom of Poland, great changes have taken place in Russia's

general political situation. The disasters of the Russo-Japanese war, the enormous growth of all revolutionary parties, the repressive measures of autocracy have combined to produce a condition of affairs undreamed of half a decade ago. Nowhere are these changes more apparent than among the Jewish proletariat. The children of the ghettoes and settlements have been aroused to a sense of what they owe themselves and gathered under the largest Jewish organisation of modern times.

They have realised the need of fighting their own battles, of watching their revolution carefully and aiding it, inasmuch, but only inasmuch, as the results may be beneficial to themselves. They are no longer content to toil all the week and listen to the Rabbi on the Sabbath. The vista of freedom and a new era has been opened up to them. They are practising in the political life of the country, and as they only see a prospect of political freedom in revolution, what wonder is it that they have become the greatest revolutionaries? Not only do they strive to attain their end by organising strikes themselves, but they aid the Polish proletariat with monetary and moral help, if they consider that the success of some strike will be to their own advantage. And this attitude of the ghetto will not change. Even the most sanguine assimilators admit that the Bund has destroyed their hopes so far as the Jewish masses, nearly 80% of the total Jewish population, is concerned. Whatever inclinations they may have had to assimilate with the Polish community have vanished since they knew the Bund.

Why should they lose their individuality when they will obtain civil rights and a cultural autonomy when autocracy is no more? Afterwards, perhaps, when they have been sufficiently launched on Socialism to be able to consider the trifling differences of parties, some may join other revolutionary societies. But they will remain revolutionaries, for the old régime has treated them too much like a step-mother to keep them once they have begun to think for themselves. When they only felt, they hated the *goya*, and now that reason has been added to their passion it can only lead them further away from the Polish community. For good or evil the Bund has taken the Jewish masses into its hands, taught them not only to hope but to believe in their own power.

No factor has been so helpful to the Bund as the revolver. Before the organisation was known in the ghetto, firearms were there looked upon with horror. The agonies of fear which the Jewish recruit suffered have become proverbial. It is by no means a rare thing for the riding-master to have their legs lashed to the horses' flanks, because they are too nervous to keep on. Bred under the most unhealthy conditions imaginable, fed upon insufficient food, unused to all physical exercise, miserable, half-starved and sickly, the children of the ghetto shrink from occupations other men enjoy. Five years ago the sight of a passing patrol was sufficient to scatter any gathering in the Jewish quarter. Not so to-day. The armed groups who are appointed to protect

meetings, fire at once when soldiers approach them, and, what is more, hit their mark. Bombs are things from which the most courageous men shrink, and yet the most successful bomb outrages of the past year have been perpetrated by Jews. The bomb factories which the police discover in Warsaw and other Polish towns from time to time are almost always in the Jewish quarters. The Polish Party of Socialists frequently employ Jewish adherents to execute the death sentence, either by means of a bomb or revolver. The reason sometimes given is that the Israelite's hostility to a Gentile will insure the success of the attempt. The most interesting occurrence of the kind which I can recall at present happened in May 1906, when a Jew threw a bomb at a certain K., a member of the Warsaw police-force as he stood on duty near the Marszalkovska—at seven o'clock in the evening. K. had a very bad reputation among political parties generally. He was excessively cruel to prisoners, and had shot innocent women in a gateway the preceding autumn. The Polish Party of Socialists warned him that if he did not resign he would be killed. He promised to send in his papers, but remained at his post. It was not until six months afterwards, however, that he met his death. His assassin, in spite of the policeman and two soldiers who never left him whilst on duty, managed to throw the bomb just under his feet. He was literally blown into pieces. A week later one of his legs was found 100 yards from the scene of the outrage on the roof of

a five-storied house. The most characteristic feature of the incident lies in the fact that the Polish Party of Socialists published a proclamation next day to the effect that one of its adherents had executed the death sentence passed upon K. Shortly afterwards a notice appeared in one of the party's organs to the effect that: "The author of the attempt upon K. was Boruch Szulman, 20 years old, a workman and a member of the fighting committee of our party. After throwing the bomb he perished from a rifle-shot." The Party did not think it necessary to apologise to the relatives of the innocent victims who perished from Szulman's "attempt."

The Bund armed the Jewish proletariat. Other revolutionary parties followed the Bund's example, and the consequence is that not a street quarrel takes place without the assistance of the inevitable Browning revolver. This is not the worst. All these parties found the aid of the loafer necessary, not only for work in the armed groups, but for executing death sentences. Once armed, these men, feeling the power of the revolver, began to use them for their own ends. Many men who were honest a year ago, but have been ruined by the strikes and forced to earn a living the best way they can, join these bands. Banditism in Poland has therefore assumed alarming proportions. Honest people, who dare not keep firearms without a licence and find the gunsmiths' shops have not got revolvers even when the licence is forthcoming, are terrorised by them.

The following is an extract from the *Warsaw Courier* of January 10, 1906. The issues of January 14 and 16 varied little from it. The only difference is in the names of the victims and the sums of money extorted.

"Two men armed with revolvers entered the beer-shop in the Ząbkovska yesterday and demanded money and three bottles of *vodka*. . . .

"Some persons unknown went last evening to Mr. I.'s warehouse, *Noviniarska* 16, and began to shoot, demanding money. When nobody answered, they fired at the glass doors and windows until they were all smashed, and then ran away. This is the second outrage of the kind at Mr. I.'s warehouse.

"In K.'s general shop (Ceglana No. 4) four men, all out of work, were arrested for demanding five roubles and threatening to shoot K. if the money was not forthcoming.

"A few weeks ago some people entered Mr. Zysman's house and demanded 300 roubles for the Polish Party of Socialists. Z. refused. Yesterday they called again. Z. gave them a few roubles, which they took, promising to come for the balance in a few days' time. . . .

"A cobbler, B., was arrested in the warehouse belonging to Mr. Pryves for begging in company with four other men and threatening to shoot.

"In a shop in the Krolevska a band of men threatened to throw a bomb if their demands for money were not satisfied. . . .

"Five men entered Mr. Ben's shop and demanded 3,000 roubles. A policeman happened to hear of it and went to arrest them. Three of the men ran away, and Mr. Ben, shaking with fear, said the other two were customers. . . .

"Anarchists go into the boot-shops and demand boots —mostly women's.

"Five delegates entered Zbrozek's chocolate factory and demanded wages for workmen who had been dismissed from the factory. They called themselves representatives from the Bund; one of them fired off his revolver. The report brought a police inspector, who arrested one of the men. The rest ran away.

"Four young men in students' uniforms entered a house on the Grzybovski Square, and asked if the wages of the *stròz* (house-guardian) had been raised. They also demanded 28 roubles. The landlord's wife said her husband was not at home, and they left, promising to return to-morrow."

I have given this as an example of the way in which the inhabitants of Warsaw are visited daily by men asking for money. Space forbids my using extracts from reports from the provinces.

During the six months which have elapsed between January and June 1906, things have not improved. I append an extract from the *Polish Courier* for June 15, in which, as before, the day's accidents are recorded.

"To-day at noon some persons unknown shot at Anthony Horonin, 42 years of age—police inspector, as

he was passing No. 9 in the Volska. He fell dead instantly, receiving three wounds. The assassins escaped.

"At five o'clock this morning two men went up to the *stròz* at No. 9 Stalova, and shot at him from revolvers. Neither of them hit its mark. The men escaped.

"Yesterday at half-past one somebody shot at police inspector M. from the gateway of 110 Panska. M. fell dead. Soldiers, who happened to be passing, began to fire at the people who had run away from the scene of the outrage. One man, name unknown, was killed, and two workmen wounded. The police raided No. 110 and arrested four people.

"A little later in the afternoon, that is about three o'clock, Bienik, a member of the mounted police force, was mortally wounded by a revolver-shot whilst passing the Krolevska Street in a tram. A policeman who was standing close by tried to arrest the would-be assassin, but he was wounded in the leg by somebody in the tram, and the assassin escaped in a cab. Soldiers began to shoot at the cab, but instead of hitting the people inside, they wounded three passers-by—a servant, Josephine M., a butcher, Kondracki, and a Jew who was driving from the station.[1]

"Soon after nine o'clock this morning a policeman, accompanied by some soldiers, went into the Zabia[2] in order to search the people in the street. When at the

[1] Rumour says that this Jew had escaped from the massacres at Bialystok only to be injured as soon as he reached Warsaw.

[2] In the Jewish quarter.

corner of the Bank Square he went up to some young men, he was shot at. He and the soldiers fell wounded, and their assailants ran away. The ambulance arrived and found that the policeman had received two wounds, the two soldiers one each. The ambulance conveyed them to the military hospital in a grave condition.

"At ten o'clock last night, a post van drove up to No 8 in the Biała. When the postman was about to enter the house, several men surrounded him and demanded the letters containing money. Although they were armed with revolvers, the postman did not lose his presence of mind, but, throwing off the men, rushed down to the *stròz* (house-guardian) and told him to shut the gate. Two of the roughs managed to escape before the *stròz* had time to do so, and the third was caught."

So much for Warsaw. Provincial correspondence in the same issue records a daring attack on the post office in Zgierz, near Lodz, of which thirty masked men armed with knives and revolvers were the heroes. Two who entered by the back entrance asked one of the sentries where stamps were sold. When the latter turned round to point out the window, the new-comer snatched away his musket and wounded him in the abdomen with a knife.

Meanwhile five other masked men had entered the forwarding office on the first floor, where three soldiers were on guard. They killed one and mortally

wounded the others. Two more accomplices entered a neighbouring room and wounded one of the three clerks who were there; the other two, completely losing their presence of mind, threw themselves out of the window and were seriously injured.

The fourth group went into the room where the safe is kept and where the postmaster and his assistant were at work. Holding revolvers to their heads the marauders ordered the postmaster to open the safe. On his making some reply, they mortally wounded him. But the soldier who had been wounded at first managed to escape from the hands of his assailants and ran into the street calling for assistance. The whole band, on seeing the turn things had taken, left the post office as quickly as possible, without stopping to take the money but carrying three muskets away with them. Two of them were afterwards found in a forest close by. Five others, who were arrested a little further from the town, threw their revolvers into a pond when they saw dragoons approaching them.

It must be added that the band had cut the telephone and telegraph wires before beginning operations.

The Lodz correspondent records the following mishap for the same day. "Yesterday S. Kobylecki, 26 years old, was shot in the Lutomierska market-place. Terror has been employed against the *Stròzy* (house-guardians) who refuse to strike. The *stròz* at 12 Piotrkovska was mortally wounded whilst lighting his lamps. The *stròz* at No. 50 was so badly beaten that he had to be taken to the

hospital. Terror is used against the coffee-house keepers also. Mr. Ulrich refused to shut his establishment and the agitators shot at him. Luckily all six shots missed their mark, and only destroyed a mirror which cost 900 roubles.

"The workmen in P.'s factory in the Sredna demanded a $9\frac{1}{2}$-hours' working day instead of the 10 hours they had agreed to a short time ago. The factory was closed in consequence. P. received several threatening letters, and yesterday some men went to see him. He told them through the open window that he would re-open his factory only on condition that the men worked 10 hours a day. When he had said this one of the men shot at him. But the bullet missed P. and only smashed a window. The men ran away."

I have given the above extracts because they are records of daily events in Warsaw and other large towns, not because they constitute any unusual facts. They have been going on now since 1905. Every few days the raid upon a post office or a saving's bank is varied by that on a *dvor* (manor house) with more or less loss of life. But whether in town or country, the assailants are invariably armed with revolvers, which they know how to use with fatal results. The consequence is that everybody in the country is in constant danger of being wounded, if not killed, either at home or in the street. If he be not liable to perish from a revolver, the chances are that he will meet his fate from a soldier's rifle fired at some assassin. People who come to the country for

a short time are horrified at this state of anarchy: but the inhabitants have got used to it. The outrages are recorded without comment and elicit little surprise. Nobody shows as much indignation as the leaders of the revolutionary parties who have armed the irresponsible masses. Their newspapers are constantly informing the public that[1] "We give no permission to extort money from private persons for the cause with threats," or, "We have been much annoyed at discovering that death-sentences purporting to be signed by us are being distributed in order to extort money. We wish to state once and for all that we never pass death-sentences upon those who don't deserve them." This is no doubt very considerate of the revolutionaries, but offers small comfort to the victims of the armed ruffians who infest the country at present. After all, it does not make much difference whether a man has his brains blown out by a Social Democrat, a Bundist, or a "non-party" assassin.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish the cases in which simple banditism has been at work from those ordered by one of the parties. Very often a man is assassinated by accident. The chief of the Bialystok police, murdered in June 1906, was a victim of mistaken identity. The Jewish revolutionary party of the town apologised to his widow; but the man, a very worthy one by the way, was dead. I remember a case of a *stròz* (house-guardian) who was shot one afternoon in

[1] See the *Red Standard*, the workmen's and other party organs.

Warsaw. After his death the party discovered they had punished the wrong man—the *stròz* next-door had incurred their anger. The widow received consolation in the form of a 100-rouble note.

Whether the leaders of the Bund will live to regret the initiative they took in arming their proletariat; whether it is wise to place weapons at the disposal of masses of men who have every temptation to use them against innocent people; whether the anarchy thereby engendered will finally lead the country to a state of order, or the proletariat will prove itself too powerful for its quondam mentors, are questions which time alone can answer. But whatever may be the final solution of the problem, the blame or the praise for arousing the dark masses of the Polish ghettoes must rest with the Bund.

APPENDIX

The following extracts from some resolutions recently passed by a congress of Bundists throwing light upon the attitude of the organisation towards general questions may interest the reader.

Agitation meetings (under the protection of armed groups) must be organised as often as possible, in factories, workshops, synagogues and open spaces. The organisation must be strengthened by the accession of men and women who devote all their time to the cause.

It is necessary to extend agitation to every possible quarter. Groups of non-Jewish workmen must be formed to agitate among the non-Jewish proletariat in order to gain the greatest amount of political influence by the time autocracy is abolished.

The old fighting methods must be abandoned and more decisive and revolutionary ones formed. Those who are not armed must be supplied with weapons without delay.

General Strikes are of paramount importance, as they obstruct the industrial and cultural life of the Empire.

Propaganda must be carried on amongst the soldiers, and special committees formed for this branch of the work.

Terror must be applied when necessary. It is also necessary that public men who are dangerous to the cause be removed.

In time of public disturbances government buildings must be stormed by the populace.

Other Revolutionary Parties

The Polish Party of Socialists.—The Jews play an important part in the Polish Party of Socialists, especially as leaders and organisers. The programme of the P. P. S., as the party is popularly called, includes the foundation of a Polish republic on democratic

lines; that is, the patriotic element is introduced. For this reason the P. P. S. only appeals to those Jews who have adopted a certain amount of Polish culture and look upon Poland as their country. It therefore does very different work from the Bund, as its leaders have little sympathy with Yiddish and ghetto culture. But there is a Jewish committee which carries on propaganda among the Jewish proletariat. There is no space here to discuss this party at length. For seven years, that is, from 1893 till 1900, the P. P. S. were first in the Socialistic field in Poland, for the Social Democrats were weak from many adversities, and the Bund had not made its appearance. But even to-day it holds its own against all rivals, and is as strong as any political party now existing in the country. It has been especially active during the past year, and, apart from its political work, often performs duties which are done by the police in other countries.

A line of steamers which ply on the Vistula between Warsaw and Plock had long been infested with a band of card-sharpers who imposed upon the peasant passengers to a scandalous degree. The owners of the boats applied to the police several times in vain. But the P. P. S. got to hear about it, and determined to put a stop to the nuisance. One morning, as the five sharpers were playing on one of the boats, eight strangers entered the cabin where they and their victims were sitting, and taking out revolvers, ordered the sharpers to go on deck

and the other passengers to stay where they were. They obeyed; a death sentence was read out, and they were told to stand in a row whilst it was being executed. At the same time the man at the wheel was told that he would be shot if he gave the alarm or stopped the boat —they were some way out of Warsaw, and the river was clear. Then the shooting began. The sharpers ran about the deck and tried to hide in the cabin, but before long they were all lying on the deck. Their executioners threw three of them who were dead overboard, and, leaving the others where they were, told the man in charge to put into the bank, carried a wounded comrade ashore, and disappeared into the rushes.

When the P. P. S. raids a public or semi-public institution for money, it always names the amount of money taken in the next issue of its organ, and sometimes gives the names of those who took part in the raid. The same plan is adopted with those who have been shot for treachery or taking money under false pretensions or for private use. The members put down drunkenness and gambling in the factories with a strong hand. The following proclamation appeared in a large iron factory a short time ago.

"Comrades," it begins, "during the great strike we fought, among other things, for the abolition of searching, and for the institution of a system of workman-overseeing in place of the old system of spying which has hitherto prevailed. But bitter experience has taught

us that there are many workmen who have not yet grown worthy of humane laws, and whose moral conduct is such that they want the foreman's whip and fines to keep them in order. Drunkards have begun to show themselves in the factories, especially after pay-days, and by their conduct cause rioting and fighting in which the other men are often obliged to interfere. That is not all. These men, not content with turning the factories and workshops into pot-houses, have even made gambling-dens of them as well. The rest of the workmen have made up their minds to put a stop to this excess, the dignity of the proletariat must be preserved. Individuals who bring shame upon us must be removed. Therefore it has been decided, at a meeting recently held, that he who enters his factory drunk for the first time shall be sent away from work for three days; for the second offence six days; for the third offence for twelve days; while the fourth offence shall be punished by dismissal from the factory or workshop altogether. The same punishment shall be meted out to those who indulge in gambling."

There is no doubt that the P. P. S. has done a great deal of good in the way of putting a stop to drunkenness and gambling; from time to time it raids the brothels of the large towns as well.

This party also committed the robberies which took place on the Vienna and Vistula Railway lines in July 1906, when over two hundred thousand roubles were

taken from the mail-waggons. The money was added to the funds collected for the general strike which the P. P. S., in coalition with the other parties, wished to organise for the following August. These outrages were committed in the coolest possible manner. In the second Vienna-Railway incident, when the evening train from Aleksandrovo, the frontier station, was within ten versts of Warsaw, the engine-driver noticed a group of people standing by the plant, one of whom was making signals with a red lantern. At the same time he felt that one of the automatic brakes was being used in the carriages, the train stopped, some fourteen or fifteen people boarded it; half of them took possession of the driver and stoker, whilst the others began to disconnect the part which contained the mail-coach, separated from the engine by seven goods-waggons. No sooner was this done than two or three men, armed with revolvers, jumped out of each carriage and kept guard over their frightened fellow-passengers, after telling them that they had nothing to fear so long as they kept quiet. Meanwhile, one of the men who had boarded the engine drove it a few hundred yards away from the rest of the train, his accomplices gathered round the mail-waggon, shot at the doors and windows until they made enough holes to effect an entrance, disarmed the post-office official who was in charge, and who had wounded one of the assailants, and set to work. One of the band took the book containing a list of the monies in the waggon,

read out the numbers of the bags which were wanted to his comrades, who sorted the private correspondence from that belonging to the railway, taking the latter and leaving the former intact. When this was done they gave the official back his revolver, told the driver not to move till they were out of sight, and walked off with their booty, which amounted to about one hundred thousand roubles, being the week's takings from the principal stations between the frontier and Warsaw. During the proceedings a large red flag with the party's initials printed on it was planted near the train. One of the conductors said that the train was stopped in his presence by a second-class passenger who put a revolver to his head when he protested against the use of the brake. The whole incident did not take very long, for the train was only half-an-hour late in Warsaw. A similar robbery was committed earlier in the same day on the same line, when nine men who resisted the assailants were shot. The P. P. S. also lost one man. The third was committed on the Vistula line, when a gendarme lost his life. A receipt for the whole sum appeared in the next issue of the *Robotnik* (workman), the party's organ.

The P. P. S. also organised the raids on the government spirit-shops, which were of daily occurrence during the months of June and July, and forced the authorities to close them altogether. On such an occasion near Lodz, the four raiders kept five Cossacks

at bay for several hours, and finally escaped with the money.

The Social Democratic League of Poland was founded by Rosa Luxemburg, a Jewess, and Karski in 1893. Its programme is the same as that of the Bund except for the clause treating with Jewish nationalism. A large proportion of the members of this party are Jews. A police raid was made when a meeting of the Warsaw section was being held in that town in the spring of 1906. A few days afterwards, a list of those arrested appeared. It contained 75 names, of which 66 were indisputably Jewish, and the rest either doubtful or non-Jewish. The Social Democrats, being anti-national, appeal to many of the Jewish *Intelligentia* who have left the traditions of the Hebrew culture far behind them, and yet know little or nothing of Polish culture. These men and women have generally been educated in the Russian Gymnasia, where the tendency of the teaching in non-national. The Social Democrats seem, to the outsider, to live in an imaginary world, mapped out by Marx and Engel, and not in the world which is.

The voice of this party is not often heard except in connection with some strike. Now and again they expose some impostors by printing such notices as this in their paper, *Czervony Sztandar* (The Red Standard)—

"We have just received a red paper with a black border signed 'The Social Democratic League for the

Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania,' and containing the following statement:— 'Death sentence passed on N. N. for spying on the Social Democrats. If you don't save yourself by running away, this sentence will be executed either in your home or in the factory. We give you a week to take leave of your friends and family.' This sentence is utterly false, and was put into our hands by N. N. of D.'s factory, probably by a man who wanted to get his place. Some villain has put our seal to it to make it look genuine. We hereby give notice that our organisation *sends death sentences to nobody*, and that we shall punish the wretches who forge such sentences without mercy. We call upon our comrades to help us crush these villains who try to contaminate the revolution with their dirty hands."

The rank and file of these parties quarrel among themselves and with the followers of the National Democratic Party. Sometimes the most trivial disagreement will lead to a fuss in the factory. Lately, the Socialists used terror to have Patriotic workmen dismissed from the factories in which the Socialistic element predominates, and by the beginning of August things had got to such a pitch in Warsaw and Lodz, so many lives were lost in the quarrels which took place, and in which the Patriots came off worst, that the latter issued an appeal to the Polish community to help them to put a stop to this form of terrorism by having the factories in which it had been practised closed until

the Socialists promised to take them back. The following incident proves that the most trivial causes were sufficient to bring about the "party's" interference.

Two women who worked side by side in one of the spirit warehouses in Praga (a suburb of Warsaw), one a Socialist and the other a Patriot, had a discussion about the virtues of their respective parties and came to blows. The Patriot got the best of it; but the Socialist went to her party and demanded instant satisfaction. The next morning, two delegates went to the manager of the warehouse and told him that he must dismiss the Patriot at once. The manager refused, but removed her to another room for a day, after which he told her to go back to her old place. But this arrangement did not please her political enemy, who fetched the delegates. They came, turned the Patriot out by force, and told the manager that if he did not receive one of their *protégées* in her place he would have good reason to regret his obstinacy.

At about the same time Lodz was the scene of a several days' feud, in which the Socialists and the Patriots lost no opportunity of putting bullets into each other. But perhaps the most barbarous act of revenge was committed upon a young man, a Patriot, who was shot by the Socialists because he brought the tanners' strike to an end. A young Jew was shot in the street by his party, the Bund, for using its seal for his own private ends. His grave was desecrated three times within as many

weeks, and boys dug it up again and again in order, they said, to exhume his body and throw it out of the cemetery. The fact that his sister was standing by the grave at the time did not deter them, and it was only the arrival of some workmen which put a stop to the outrage.

PART II

THE POLISH JEW'S PAST

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL SKETCH

BEFORE considering the future prospects of the Polish Jew it is necessary to draw aside the veil which obscures his past, and glance at the influences which have tended to form his character since the first of his race took refuge amongst the Sclavonic people.

The Middle Ages, the treatment of the past, the character, restrictions, persecutions, proscriptions and privileges, the ghettoes, communes and the *kahals* created the Jewish question which has assumed such gigantic proportions in the Russian Empire at the present day, and of which the influence has extended as far as England and America. It is difficult to say when the Jew entered Poland; for though it is certain that he was there before Christianity, his first advent is wrapped in the rumours and mysteries of tradition and legend. It seems equally certain that he went there for the purpose of carrying on that traffic for which the Sclavs were famous, taking his slaves as far from Poland as the Pyrenees. There is one legend touching the Jew which, if it serves no other purpose, indicates that he was

received by the Poles with good humour and enjoyed their confidence and esteem.

According to this *bajka* (legend) the Kingdom of Poland, whilst yet pagan, was suddenly bereft of her King, Popiel by name, who had been gathered to his fathers by undergoing the uncomfortable process of being eaten up by mice as a punishment for his manifold iniquities. There was some difficulty about choosing his successor. The election meetings had been long and stormy, everybody was in a hurry to get home, and the suggestion of an old man that they should settle the question by electing the first person who entered the town at daybreak was received with enthusiasm. Primitive as it was, it at least saved the indolent Poles from any trouble in the way of post-electoral petitions and the tiresome consequences of such political amenities as sumptuous dinners and crowded "at homes."

As chance decreed, the first man to enter the town after daybreak was a Jewish merchant, Abraham, who dealt in gunpowder and was known to his customers by the endearing and diminutive form—Abramek. He was hailed with joy and taken in triumph through the town to receive the crown which had so lately rested upon King Popiel's wicked head. But Abramek, either because he was overpowered by the great and unexpected honour or because he felt chary about wearing a diadem left by a man whose body had nourished mice, refused. The electors were importunate: they remonstrated, pleaded and threatened, and at last it was arranged that

Abramek should retreat for a short time into an empty hut to reflect upon the duties and responsibilities which had been so suddenly thrust upon him. The impatient electors waited, waited, and waited. Two days and two nights passed, but Abramek still remained in meditation. At last one of them, named Piast, said that as Abramek did not emerge from the hut himself, he meant to go and fetch him. Like most suggestions which nobody had thought of before, it was received with enthusiasm and wonder that the meeting had overlooked such a simple solution. In a few minutes Piast had broken in the door of Abramek's hut. "Poles!" cried the Jew, emerging at last. "Your countryman, Piast, has done a clever thing. Take him for your leader! He has understanding, for he has perceived that the country may not remain so long without a king. He is courageous, because he broke open the door of my hut when the meeting had decided that I should remain in meditation; offer him the crown, and I hope you will be grateful to God and to Abramek for the suggestion." And so it was that the first of a long and illustrious line of kings was chosen by a Jew for the Polish people.

The immigration of Jews into Poland, hitherto intermittent, appears to have become permanent during the eighth century. Not only did they flock thither from Germany, Hungary and Bohemia, but they left their settlements in the Crimea and in the land of Rus, to seek refuge in Poland.

The Arabian historian, Eba Hankal, who flourished

in the tenth century, says that there was at that time a prosperous Hebrew state famous for its agricultural superiority upon the banks of the Volga, ruled over by a Jewish monarch. The name of it was Bath, and its territory was protected by 1,200 warriors. What became of that community we know not, but it is supposed that after its fall or decay the inhabitants went to the land of Rus, and thence, as we shall see, to Poland and Lithuania, where their descendants, ignorant of their traditions, live at the present day.

But this was not the only important Jewish settlement in Eastern Europe. Some of the children of Israel who were enslaved by the Babylonians and Assyrians drifted in the course of time to the land of the Armenians and thence to those countries, such as the Crimea and Caucasus, which now belong to the Russian Empire. In the year 1840 a diligent search in the Crimean Peninsula was rewarded by the discovery of the remains of Hebrew civilisation. One of the monuments there found, dated in the four thousand and twenty-seventh year of the Jewish era, and therefore corresponding to the nine hundred and sixty-seventh year after the birth of Christ, was erected to the memory of Isaac Sangari, a famous figure in Jewish history. It was he who tamed and united the wild tribes among whom he had settled, introducing Hebrew civilisation. We find traces of these Crimean Jews as far as Kieff, where they attempted to convert Vladimir the Great to Judaism. The story runs that these Crimean Jews, hearing that the Prince had

decided to abandon the pagan religion of his forefathers and adopt a creed which would bring himself and his subjects under the influence of civilisation, sent delegates to Kieff with the message, "We hear that Bulgarians and Christians have come to teach you their creeds. The Christians believe in one whom we have crucified. We only believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." When Vladimir asked them what their convictions were, they replied, "To be circumcised, to refrain from eating the flesh of pigs and of hares, and to keep holy the Sabbath Day." The Prince asked where their land was. "Jerusalem," they answered. "But do you live there now?" Vladimir enquired. To this the Jews answered, "God was angered with our forefathers, and scattered us all over the world for our sins, and our land was given to Christians." "How can you," asked Vladimir, when he heard this, "cast aside by God and scattered as you are, teach others? If God had loved you and your law, you would not be wanderers upon earth. Do you want the same misfortune to fall upon us?"

So Vladimir the Great refused to embrace Judaism. Nevertheless they translated the books of Moses into Russian (the original is, or was, in the Vatican), and must have had a certain amount of influence in the Principality of Kieff to venture to try to convert its Prince. But this influence gradually weakened, and the position of those Jews who had settled there became so unbearable that they were obliged to leave Vladimir's domains and take refuge in Poland. The Jews attributed this change

in the attitude of the Russians to Greek intrigue, but the Russian historians affirm that the Jewish usurers alone were to blame, as they charged such high interest for their loans that their debtors grew exasperated. In the year 1112 the soldiers in the Principality mutinied, and concluded their orgies by sacking the Jewish quarters in Kieff, which were also destroyed by fire a few years later. One prince of the line of Monomach, anxious to obtain possession of the crown, gained his object by suggesting that the people should expel the Jews from the land, and set the example by driving them from his own estates.

They were not any more fortunate in the Southern portion of the land of Rus, for, though the inhabitants of the country tolerated them, they suffered terribly from Tartar raids.

In Vilno, on the other hand, they flourished so well that they occupied a large portion of the town. But they had less influence in the neighbouring Principality of Moscovy, whither they appear to have paid frequent visits for trading purposes, and even collected taxes which were rented to them by the prince. In Lithuania they suffered persecution, and fled thence to Poland. They were afterwards taken back to Lithuania as slaves, or drifted thither whilst trading, and prospered more than their co-religionists who had remained in Poland, where the Jews from Germany had already obtained leave from King Leszek to settle. This king's reputation for toleration attracted thousands of Jews, who obtained their

first Charter of Privileges in Poland in the year 905 A.D. This document was unfortunately lost during the wars with Germany in the next century; but copies of that granted by King Boleslas in the year 1264 are still extant, and prove that the Jews were treated in Poland with toleration at a time when they were persecuted not only in Germany but in England as well. The most interesting clauses in this Charter are the following:—

(1) In cases against a Jew a Christian alone cannot bear witness: Jews must also do so.

(3) A Jew may take any article as a pledge except those used in Church or soaked in blood.

(6) When a pledge has been stolen and the Jew swears he did not know of it, then the Christian must pay him the capital lent upon the pledge and the interest thereof.

(7) When a Christian pledge is lost, by fire or by theft, whilst in a Jew's keeping, the Jew may free himself from the responsibility thereof by an oath.

(8) The Jews in quarrels amongst themselves are excluded from the Polish tribunals; they shall remain under the protection of the King, or a *Wojewoda*, (Governor of a district).

(9) He who wounds a Jew shall pay a fine and the costs of his cure.

(10) He who murders a Jew shall pay a fine and suffer confiscation of his property.

(11) He who strikes a Jew shall pay a fine.

(12) Jews shall not pay higher taxes than the townspeople.

(14) A Christian who spoils a Jewish cemetery shall suffer the confiscation of his estate and pay a fine besides.

(18) He who throws stones at a Jewish school shall give the *Wojewoda* two pounds of pepper.

(20) When there is no proof as to who has murdered a Jew, we will give legal protection against the suspected man.

(24) No man shall be quartered upon a Jew.

(26) The abduction of a Jewish child shall be considered as a theft.

(27) When a pledge has been in a Jew's possession for a year and a day, it becomes his property.

(28) Jews cannot be forced to give back pledges upon their feast days.

(29) Those who take them away by force shall pay a fine.

(30) The Jews may not be accused of using Christian blood.

(35) In night attacks the neighbours must lend the Jews aid under pain of a fine.

(36) Jews may buy all kinds of goods and touch bread and other eatables.

The Jews were able to freely profit by this Charter for the next century. At the end of that time the Poles conceived a dislike to foreigners. This was owing to the bad government and consequent unpopularity of King Ludwig of Hungary, who reigned in Poland from 1370–1382. They suffered from the delinquencies of the Hungarians who flocked to the country. The

Charter was modified, and during the reigns of Ludwig's successors, Kings of the House of Jagiellon, the children of Israel were ordered to wear red patches upon their clothes and yellow caps to distinguish them from the rest of the population. Their condition became still more deplorable after the Council of Basle (1431–1443), whose influence reached Poland and led to the persecution of the Jews, who had learned to look upon this country as a haven of security from the massacres and ill-treatment they had experienced in other parts of Europe.

The reader will doubtless recollect that the Jewish question obtained a large share of the Council's attention, and that their object was to employ measures which would force them to embrace Christianity. Hard laws, all tending to exclude them from intercourse with the Christians, were passed, and Polish delegates took copies of them home. Then John de Capostrano, the Inquestor of the Jews, visited Cracow, and his anti-Semitism, combined with the zeal of the Polish clergy for their Church, incited the townspeople to such an extent that they fell upon the Jews, sacking their shops and houses, burning and massacring them and their families in a manner worthy of a Spanish *auto-de-fé*.

These terrible scenes, which generally terminated with the expulsion of the survivors, were repeated in Lemberg and other towns, for the passions of the people had been fanned by the adherents of Capostrano to such a pitch that the wildest charges against his victims re-

sulted in massacre, rapine and arson. The King, Kazimierz Jagiellonczyk, was powerless to help his *protégés*, and they could only wait until the passion of the masses had been satisfied, when they again crept back to their former haunts, set up their booths and bartered, ran errands, and lent money as of old. This wave of anti-Semitism, however, had one lasting effect, for even after the popular passion, tired of bloodshed, had sunk down to the usual state of passive anti-Semitism, legislation stepped in and placed restrictions upon their mode of living. They were no longer allowed to build their dwellings side by side with the Christians. Not only were they ordered to live in isolated quarters of the towns, separated by a wall or ditch, but Christians who owned property near their dwellings were obliged to sell it without delay, lest they should become contaminated by living near the Hebrews. This wave of exotic anti-Semitism, which was evinced in a manner totally at variance with the principles and sentiments of the Polish people, strove to separate the Jews further than ever from the rest of the community. They were forbidden to bring their quarrels before a Polish magistrate, and from this time they began to consider the Talmud as their authority in the quarrels and misunderstandings which sprang up between themselves, and to look up the Rabbis as their judges. In Posen the Law of Moses was referred to in judging Jews charged with misdemeanor, and the order to use it for this purpose was given by King Sygmunt Augustus. At the same

time the Jews in Lithuania were ordered to bring their quarrels before their own court and to obey the verdict of this body.

With the fall of the House of Jagiellon and the rise of the elective monarchy, their state grew worse instead of better. Henry of Valois, the Frenchman who sat upon the Polish throne, brought the petty persecutions they suffered to a crisis. His successor, Stephan Batory (1576–86), a Pole, treated them with more justice. It was he who first gave their *Kahals* the right to govern the internal affairs of their Communes. But still these vicissitudes did not separate them from the rest of the population as much as it might have done. Indeed, their separation only became general when the nobility, or *Szlachta,* granted them charters and the right to settle in groups upon their land.

It is difficult to-day, when Poland's neck has been under a foreign yoke for a century, to realise the enormous amount of power the Polish nobles then exercised over the peasants and Jews. The last not only settled in the royal cities, *i. e.* those which fell under the jurisdiction of the King, but in course of time they lived in the "noble towns," *i. e.* those which were built upon the lands of nobles, and in the noble villages, both of which fell under the governance of the lord of the manor. These lords were the undisputed masters of the Jews and peasants who lived upon their soil. So great were their privileges, and so powerfully did they support one another, that the kings themselves did not often venture

to contradict them. As to the Jews, they were at their mercy; their lawsuits against Christian debtors and Christian oppressors were decided by their lords, whose power was very often abused in favour of a fellow-countryman and a co-religionist. Nevertheless it is well not to forget the balance allowed by the Polish character. Like all Sclavs, they were careless, easy-going, idle and unstable of purpose. Unless a Jew were seriously in their way they were content then, as they are now, to live and let live. Besides, the landed proprietor, like the King and the *Wojewoda*, could not get on very long without his Isaak or his Jankel, and the bargain therefore worked both ways. If the squire or magnate wanted ready money, and, Pole as he was, he always needed it, the Jew would lend it to him; if his wife wanted pearls or silks or furs, there was nobody but the Jew to procure them, for a Polish merchant, even if he undertook the task, would need as many months as the Jew days to accomplish it. If there were an important despatch to be speedily delivered at the other end of the kingdom, the Pole intrusted it to a Jew, because he knew that the bearer would not get intoxicated whilst on the road and impart the secret of his mission to others. If his house or palace were in bad repair, if he needed gold wherewith to buy the partisans who would support him at the Diet, if he wanted a suit of armour, a horse or a sword, a soldier or a coach, there was ever the ready, obliging Jew to supply his wants and wait patiently for remuneration. It mattered little for the Pole that he

paid a ridiculous price for all he bought, that he was taking the bread out of his brothers' mouths, and sinking deeper and deeper into debt. He was only too happy to have financial aid always at hand, and thereby developed the Jew's money-lending propensities. The Jew was not to blame. All other occupations were proscribed. Not being able to possess land, he could not cultivate the soil; not being allowed to carry arms, he could not become a knight. Even the pursuit of crafts was forbidden him when the townspeople found out how apt he was. His one monopoly was usury, and his only occupation commerce. Little wonder that he clung to both and excelled in these two means of earning a living.

By the middle of the sixteenth century we find, from a pamphlet entitled "Ad querelam mercatorum Cracovierosium: responsum Judaeorum de mercatura," that Poland possessed only 500 Polish as against 3,200 Jewish merchants, and, in spite of the efforts of the Polish craftsmen to retain their crafts in their own hands, that there were three times as many Jewish craftsmen. A historian of the same period remarks that "A Pole avoided commerce because 'merchant' and 'Jew' meant almost the same thing, unless indeed, here and there, a German settled and carried on his trade." The Jews had one friend, the monarch. Nearly all the Polish kings were favourably disposed towards a class which was so financially useful. The Polish townspeople were ill-matched against the superior business capacities of their

rivals, who had nothing to fear from the nobles, forbidden as they were by law to engage in trade or commerce. Living in a country lacking in natural defences, open to attacks from the West, and greedily watched by Tartars and the Cossack hordes from the East, the Polish *szlachtic* had to be prepared to sally forth at a moment's notice and fight not only for his country, but for the very roof which sheltered himself and his family. The burgher, hardly pressed by the magnates, only dreamed of becoming noble, and strove to attain this end on the ever-ready battlefield. Commerce, therefore, was left to the Jews, and the Charters which gave them permission to trade saved them for a long time from any real competition. They made full use of their opportunities. The signs of their gold were everywhere, and no monarch used this financial element better than Kazimierz the Great, who lived as far back as the sixth century. Commercial communication was so difficult in the sparsely-populated country that he formed a project of building towns along the most frequented tracts. He needed money for this undertaking, and the Polish burghers were unable to lend it him. He therefore appealed to the Jews, who advanced him a loan to cover the cost of building seventy towns. In return for this they obtained the permission to settle freely in these towns, which became the most flourishing in the whole kingdom.

Long after the death of Kazimierz European anti-Semitism penetrated into Poland and forced the Jews

to live as a separate caste. But by that time they had obtained a footing in towns and settlements from which it was impossible to dislodge them. In the days of Kazimierz many Polish towns could show the then unique sight of Jewish houses built against the walls of monasteries, and in Piotrkof the town hall and royal palace were both surrounded by Jewish dwellings. Though the magistrates and townspeople were little inclined to treat the Jews with justice, the kings continued to extend them their protection until the Diet became powerful enough to pass laws against them. Indeed, the monarchs often did their best to extend the trade of the Polish Jew to foreign countries. Their efforts in this direction were not always successful. One king, Sigmunt Augustus, tried to use his influence with Ivan Bazylevitch to enable the Jews under his rule to extend commercial enterprises to Russia. But Ivan refused to allow the Jews to enter his domain, replying with a candour which is lacking in modern diplomatic correspondence. He says: "We cannot allow the Jews to enter Russia. That people hath brought us poison for both our souls and our bodies, hath sold us powder which bringeth death, and hath blasphemed against the very Christ. For this reason I will not hear of it." In Inflandia the Jewish merchants from Poland met with the same rebuff. But they were more fortunate in the countries which lay to the south of the kingdom, and carried on lucrative trade with the Armenians, in spite of the Tartars of Perekop,

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who swooped down upon their booths from time to time and "made havoc" amongst them and their merchandise.

In Poland itself a spell of national peace always brought their rivals, the Polish burghers, against them. These townspeople's attacks were chiefly directed against the small Jewish traders and shopkeepers: those who carried on extensive export and import trade did not arouse their jealousy, for such undertakings were beyond their business capacities and powers of endurance. But they could not bear to see such outward signs of the Hebrew's prosperity as the stores of cloth and other merchandise in the towns, and especially in large cities as Cracow, Lublin and Lemberg. They sent petitions to the kings to annul or modify the charters, and, when the Diet grew more powerful and their own influence there increased, passed laws against the hated traders. In Lemberg in the sixteenth century the Jews, who had flourished exceedingly in the town, were forbidden to sell any merchandise whatever in their private houses, and were only permitted to barter certain goods in the market-place on fair-days. But, by virtue of their contract with the towns, this decree was powerless without the pale of the local magistracy, and the Jews removed their stalls and booths to the suburbs, where the land belonged to the nobles. Disputes arose between the townspeople and the local magnates, who were determined to retain their new and profitable tenants as long as possible. At last

a compromise was arrived at by which the Jews were allowed to remain where they were for another two years in order that they might sell off their stock of merchandise. But, knowing the weak side of the Polish nature, the ever-present need of ready money, they paid a tax and obtained an extension of this term. This prolonged lease gave them, in accordance with Polish law, certain rights of possession which no amount of opposition from the townspeople, headed by the magistrate, could annul. Then the burghers founded guilds, and excluded the Jews therefrom; but the latter do not appear to have suffered very much in consequence. The Polish craftsman was indolent and always liable to be called upon to change his tools for a sword and fight one of the many enemies that surrounded Poland. In fact, a law passed with a view to restricting Hebrew enterprise was generally followed by fresh Hebrew prosperity, such as the development of an extensive trade with the port of Dantzig, the establishment of large markets in Podolia and the Ukraine, and the immunity, by Royal Charter, from duty upon all goods brought into the country. It is also characteristic of the Polish Jews' history that whenever they were forced to separate from the rest of the inhabitants, their towns, or quarters of towns, grew in size and importance, whilst the place they had left declined into poor and insignificant suburbs. To quote a historian of this period (Moraczewski), this was but a natural result, for it is

not the religion, but the industry of the inhabitants which makes a town, and this last only remained with the Jews. When they first settled in Poland they were forced to live by usury, and grew rich thereby, for they were permitted to charge an interest of 25 per cent. Afterwards they were allowed to sell a few kinds of merchandise, such as coarse linen and second-hand goods; but in the course of time, when wars occupied the Poles, they sold everything, even in the "Royal Cities."

The Jews of the Ukraine and Lithuania were in a better position, both socially and financially, than their brethren in other parts of the Polish Republic. Here there were few usurers. Land produce and cattle were sent thence to other parts of the country, and even to Germany. This trade was entirely in the hands of the Hebrew, who often possessed land in Lithuania, and, when his fortune permitted him to desist from business, studied astrology and the Talmud.

True, they, in common with the Polish population, suffered much from the Cossack raids, and especially from the Cossack rebellion in the earlier half of the seventeenth century. Those wild hordes that overran the country, pillaging and burning as they went, had mercy for none, and often scorned to respect the Sanctuary of the Holy Altar. Still less did they spare the Hebrew, whose wealth aroused their cupidity and whose creed excited their own strange religious fanaticism. It was their

custom upon approaching a town or city to demand that the Jews be surrendered to them for massacre. This request was invariably refused, but the refusal generally cost large sums of money, to which the Jews themselves contributed the chief share. Lemberg paid as much as 20,000 Polish zloty [1]—an enormous sum for that time—to save the Jews from total extermination at the hands of the Cossacks. No sooner had these savages been driven back beyond the Ukraine, whence they had penetrated as far as Cracow—than the Swedish war swept over the country. The Jews were taxed in order that they might contribute towards the expense of these conflicts.

But at the same time these national misfortunes aided the Hebrews in another way. After and during the wars with the Cossacks, Swedes and Moscovites, they obtained a footing in all the towns, even in Cracow, and the magistrates ignored the infringement of their laws for the simple reason that nobody else had any leisure for trade. But this was not all. Not only did the Poles who had hitherto engaged in commerce leave their shops and booths for the battle-field, but the kings, desirous that the Jews should play a more important and profitable part in the impoverished community, held out inducements to them to become Christians. Those who did so were ennobled, made much of and received as equals by the landed proprietors

[1] About £500 in English money.

and magnates. For reasons which will be explained in the next chapter, few Jews took advantage of this opportunity of changing their faith, and it was not until the latter part of the eighteenth century, when Poland's power had almost passed away and Russia's legions were menacing her frontiers, that some of the sect of Contra-Talmudists asked, or rather consented, to be received in the fold of the Roman Catholic Church. Before this time conversions were the exception rather than the rule.

The civil position of the Jews remained about the same until the year 1791, when the Constitution of the 3rd of May, a day still commemorated in Poland as a national holiday, gave them equal civil and national rights and removed all the disabilities which had hitherto pressed upon them. The principles upon which these reforms were founded were briefly as follows:— The Jews, who had hitherto only enjoyed the toleration of the Government, were henceforth to be considered as responsible members of the community; the country had therefore the right to demand that they should have full advantage of a secular education. All distinctions of dress, of places of abode, and of legislation were to be removed, together with all differences but that of religion, which was free to all. All branches of industry were open to them. Their Communes were to have a voice in the government of the country. They were to be allowed to occupy government posts and live

in any district of the towns or parts of the country they wished. They might and must share the military service with the rest of the community; they were to be admitted into all posts, ranks and positions upon perfect equality with Christians. Rewards and punishments, honours and dishonour were to be the same for all. In twenty years' time they were to be allowed to buy landed property. No Jew was to be baptised before the age of 29, or Jewess before that of 18 years, and after one whole year of Christian instruction.

Perhaps, had Poland been allowed to carry out these reforms, the history of her Jews would be differently written, and the antipathy of race to race, which expresses itself in Separatism, in Sionism, in anti-Semitism and revolution, would have been averted. Perhaps by this beginning of the twentieth century we would have seen a new Poland, in which the Hebrew and Sclav combined hand in hand to develop the resources of a republic whose brilliant past gives rise to regret that the present is so sordid. Perhaps, indeed, the dream of the assimilator would have been realised and a new race, uniting the best qualities of Sclav and Hebrew, arisen to lead the fortune of Eastern Europe. But it was not to be. Poland fell, and with it the Polish Constitution, which she has not yet won back from her Russian masters, in spite of reiterated promises. When the civil code of Napoleon was adopted for the Kingdom of Poland in 1812, special laws against the Jews were

nominally abolished. But Russian anti-Semitism placed them under restrictions [1] which still fetter them, and which have helped to fan antipathy into hostility and engender a problem without affording the means of solving it.

[1] The chief of these restrictions are—a Jew may not serve in the army or navy as an officer, may not enter the civil service in any capacity, may not act as trustee under a Christian's will; can only enter the government schools and universities in a certain proportion, and must have the word "Jew" written upon his passport. Unless he is registered as a merchant he cannot re-enter the country after a prolonged absence.

CHAPTER II

THE PAST OF THE POLISH JEW — HIS SURROUNDINGS, ORGANISATIONS, CHARACTER, AND CULTURE

In comparing the lot of the Jews in mediæval Poland with that of their co-religionists in Germany, France, Italy, Spain and England we see that they were treated with a toleration unknown elsewhere at the time. We see that even when subjected to petty persecutions, they were not systematically ill-treated, that their teeth were not extracted nor their limbs amputated; that they were not tormented by the fanatic to change their faith nor tortured by the rapacious to render their gold. They were free to practise the rites of their religion, to barter, to travel, to come and go across the frontier in pursuit of business. They were free to administer the laws for the governance and levy taxes for the maintenance of their own communities. When the flame of exotic anti-Semitism, fanned and fed by foreign missionaries and ministers, swept through the Polish masses, the persecutions it engendered never lasted longer than a few hours, and only once did they attain proportions which placed them on a level with similar scenes enacted in the rest of Europe and repeated in other parts of Russia to-day. For a century after the Charter of

Boleslas granted them liberty and assured them protection, they had every opportunity of mixing freely with the Polish population of the towns, and even when this charter was modified they were never altogether cut off from intercourse with the Poles. How is it, then, that the number of neophytes was so small until the middle of the eighteenth century? Why was it that the inducements made to them to change their faith and become members of the Polish community were met with so coldly? Why was it that, seeing the advantages accruing from such a change, so few of them decided to make it; that the daily intercourse which took place between them and the Poles did not draw them a whit nearer to a people whose anti-Semitism was so different from that of other nations, whose tolerance was proverbial amongst the Jews of Europe, and whose national character renders assimilation so easy for the foreigner who settles amongst them? Why is it that, whereas the German colonists, who settled long after the Jews, have lost all trace of their origin but their names, becoming Polish patriots and Roman Catholics; whereas the Stuarts and O'Rourkes who sought refuge in the Republic from a hostile government, a hated monarch or religious persecution, have become as ingrained in the Polish community as if their names had ended in *ski*, the Jew is still a stranger? From the time Abramek chose Piast as King, they have only succeeded in drifting further and further from the rest of the community until their individualism has developed into

separatism, their gratitude cooled to indifference, their indifference warmed into antipathy, and their antipathy strengthened into hostility. Who is to blame for this relationship of the two races, for this waste of vital force in the country? Is it the Jew or the Catholic, the Sclav or the Hebrew? These questions must be answered at length, for the blame lies with the Poles on the one hand and the Jews on the other, with the political instincts of the first and the character of the second. Let us glance at the Polish community and consider the different classes of which it was composed.

During the tenth and eleventh centuries, that is, when the Jews first went to Poland in large numbers, the King exercised absolute power. All his subjects, from the officials who filled his train, the knights whom he clothed, armed, and fed, and the clergy who were dependent upon his bounty, down to the slaves or prisoners of war, bowed to his will and did his bidding. But the two succeeding centuries saw a change: petty princes, each with his own scheme of home and foreign politics, with his own army, court and knights, defied the kingly authority. Decade after decade marked alterations in the community: the burghers, descendants of German colonists, once prosperous, dwindled into insignificance; the princes fell to the state of knights; the monarchy became elective, and the only class which increased in influence and numbers was that comprising the descendants of the fighting men, the nobility, or

Szlachta, who virtually began to govern Poland from the fourteenth century. Their first charter dates from 1373, and was granted by Ludwig of Hungary on condition that the crown should pass to his daughter Jadwiga. They not only elected the kings, but could themselves become candidates for the kingly office. Their power over the peasantry was well-nigh unlimited. Though they levied taxes they paid none, and the King when in need of money applied to them for voluntary contributions. If they were not forthcoming, and such was frequently the case, he had recourse to the Jews. Criminal cases which sprang up between them were tried, not before the royal judges, but by their own tribunals. In 1538 the King wanted money from the *Szlachta* to carry on the war against Muscovy: it was given, but only in return for the rights of the higher tribunals. Henceforth there was no appeal to the monarch from the decision of the *Szlachta:* a plebeian who killed a noble forfeited his life, a noble paid a fine for killing a plebeian. The nobles, and the nobles alone, had the right to possess land; not only the agricultural produce, therefore, but the riches of the earth and treasure-trove belonged to them. They reserved to themselves the privilege of filling the higher ecclesiastical offices; only a member of the *Szlachta* could become a bishop or a canon; only his person was immune, only his speech free. They had their own *sejmiki,* or local Diets, where they passed laws, levied taxes upon the rest of the population, and controlled the

movements and actions of the monarch, who could not make war or peace, marry or divorce, or even go abroad without their permission. By the beginning of the sixteenth century they had passed a law decreeing that the King should change nothing in the legislature without their consent (*nihil novi*), and by the latter half of the same era they had abolished the spiritual jurisdiction which the clergy had hitherto exercised over them. Free from all duties but that of military service, this sole responsibility increased their power, which the King was always striving to weaken. This perpetual struggle led to domestic factions and fierce quarrels not only between the monarch and the *Szlachta*, but between rival magnates, anxious to obtain the greatest amount of influence at the Diet in order to pass a profitable measure or elect a relative to the throne. As the only privileged class they jealously guarded their rights. All the *Szlachta* were equal; titles gave none the ascendency, but those who disgraced the caste by engaging in trade or working at a craft lost their patent of nobility and were degraded for ever.

It is not to be wondered at that a class which exercised power without performing duties, which enjoyed the best the country had to give, which divided the burden of taxation between the burghers, the peasantry and the Jews, which had every opportunity of developing the indolent, careless, ostentatious and spendthrift side of the Sclavonic temperament, and which drew its income from the products of agriculture,

should find the Jews' gold acceptable. But this was all. No thought of the economical and political waste engendered by the peculiar position of the Hebrew appears to have crossed the nobles' minds. To them the Jews were not people but things—things to be protected against the hostility of the townspeople because, like the proverbial hen that lays the golden eggs, they were very useful. No thought of the morrow troubled them, for it is not in the Polish nature to do more than enjoy the day which is. Just as they cramped the other classes of the community by using them as conveniences created for their own present well-being, so did they use the Jews to do the work they detested and lend the gold they needed to equip them against the German or to restore the faded splendour of their palaces. So from them the Jew could not expect to receive inducements to change his faith or take his place amongst those who sat in high places. In them he found many means of building up or adding to a fortune, and protection from the burghers and the magistrates; but that was all.

He profited still less from the Polish *chłop*,[1] or peasant, whose case was perhaps worse than his own, for the *chłop* was in bondage to the noble whose land he cultivated, and was bought or sold at his pleasure. He was hemmed in by many restrictions. If he had an only son, the latter could not leave the land he was

[1] The Polish *chłop*, or peasant, was deprived of liberty in 1496. From 1543 his master had the right to sell him with or without land.

born on; if many, only one was allowed to go to the neighbouring town to learn a craft or be apprenticed to a trade. When a peasant's son left the land of his own accord, his father's inheritance, if he had any, passed to the master. His daughter could marry a free man upon one condition, that he settled on the land as if he belonged to it. If the *chłop* cultivated his master's land, he was obliged to pay a tax from out of the proceeds, to perform certain services, to pay his master in money and in kind, and to render a tenth part of his produce to the Church. He was obliged to buy his salt, herrings and drink in his master's pot-house,[1] and to sell his fowls, eggs, butter, cheese and flax to the manor and to the manor alone. His master also controlled his earnings, had the first refusal of work—at his own price. More than this. The lord of the manor did not allow his peasant to rent land on a neighbouring manor if his own fields were not under cultivation, to keep more than a fixed number of heads of cattle or to bleach more than a certain quantity of linen. The *chłop* could not sue a noble before a tribunal, and could only give evidence for his own master, who was always the last instance, from whom there was no appeal, and who could brand him, cut off his nose or sentence him to death. Yet even the *chłop* found use for the Jew, who gave him credit, sold him what few comforts of life were in his reach, disposed of his surplus corn and hay, his sheep and oxen.

[1] Almost invariably rented to a Jew.

But in the towns the Jews found at once their bitterest opponents and their ablest rivals, for though the burghers hated the Jewish merchants, they were, for reasons which will now be explained, almost powerless to resist them.

The townspeople, or *mieszczanie*, were rigorously excluded from the privileges of the *Szlachta*. They could not obtain employment in the Civil Service, attain to posts of dignity in the Church, or—with few exceptions—own land.[1] They only participated in public affairs upon the authority of and in accordance with the charters of their respective towns. Vilno and Cracow, indeed, enjoyed the right of sending representatives to the Diet in the sixteenth century, but they were so completely outnumbered by the *Szlachta* that they ceased to profit by this clause of their charter before the close of the same century. They took part in the elections of the King, but here again they were outnumbered.[2]

But if they laboured under great civil disabilities, the economic difficulties which confronted them were not less considerable. They were beset by the *Szlachta* on every side. The *Szlachta* had the right of importing foreign goods free of duty, a privilege they shared with the Jews, who managed the nobles' import as well as their own.

[1] Burghers of the Russian towns and Cracow had the right to acquire landed property.

[2] The towns of Dantzig, Torun and Elblag sent representatives to the provincial Senate, and had the right to coin money.

More than that: the *Wojewoda* had the right to tax home produce, and there is every reason to believe that he exercised it. These were not the townspeoples' only grievances. The law which decreed that trade and industry were shameful pursuits, and that fighting was the one honourable occupation, deprived the town of all possibility of profiting by the capital and work of the enlightened classes. The only towns which could possibly develop were those which, like Cracow, Lemberg and Dantzig, were situated on the highways joining the East with the West, and therefore enjoying exceptional geographical advantages. And in these towns, as we have seen, the Jews obtained a firm foothold. The very charters which allowed certain towns to build storehouses for merchandise cramped the commercial development of the country, for by the charters the foreign and local merchants were forbidden to travel by any other roads than those marked in them, and could not pass over the towns which contained their storehouses. They were obliged to store their merchandise in one of the chartered towns, and sell it on market days, and market days alone. This system of special privileges aided the growth of such towns as Cracow,[1] Lemberg, Kalisz and Posen, but meant ruin to others which were less favourably situated. Thus it was that Poland, a country which was rich in agricultural produce, formed a natural link between the East and West, which possessed a Dantzig and a Lemberg, could not develop her towns

[1] These towns were near the frontier.

because the growth of commerce, instead of being encouraged, was stunted by a hundred laws and regulations.

But the townspeople were not only cramped in respect to their pursuits; they enjoyed little freedom even in such trivial matters as in their choice of dress. The Diet of the seventeenth century forbade the *mieszczanie* to wear silk clothing and rich furs or to adorn themselves with jewellery. The private towns, that is those which were built on ecclesiastical or manor lands, enjoyed no special prerogatives unless they happened to possess charters drawn up according to German law. Their inhabitants, though personally free, were under the authority of the nobles.

These restrictions were rapidly followed by two consequences: the antipathy of the burghers to the Jews, and the anxiety to leave the despised class to which they belonged. The first consequence was inseparable from the second, because the privileges the Jews enjoyed and the business capacity they displayed made it the more difficult for the Polish burghers to amass a sufficient fortune to make them influential. In their antipathy to their rivals they were almost systematic. They made their magistrates complain to the King to draw up contracts, or *pakta*, with the Jews in the hope of arresting their prosperity. But, as we have seen, these measures were of little effect. True, some towns were altogether closed to the Jews, whom the burghers would not admit under any conditions, but these either became to all

intents and purposes German colonies or deteriorated into poverty-stricken settlements. In 1570 the Jews were banished from Warsaw; though their trade with that city was not seriously injured, because they were allowed to visit the city whilst the Diet was sitting—that is—when the palaces were occupied by the magnates and trade was in a most flourishing condition. Another potent factor in their commercial prosperity was, as we have seen, the geographical position of Poland, which caused her to be surrounded by perpetual enemies and forced her inhabitants to be warriors out of sheer self-defence.

When to these conditions and restrictions we add that trait in the national character which is best described by the word "unbusinesslike" and set them against the energy and untiring patience of the Hebrew, with his protection from the powers that were, one can scarcely wonder at the impotent hatred of the burghers or their disinclination to draw nearer to the people whose abilities and charters made them such formidable rivals.

Such is the case for the Jews, such are the conditions, prerogatives, antipathies and prejudices which caused the Polish community to treat them as strangers and mere conveniences, sometimes even as enemies.

We have seen that the monarch and magnates only protected them because they needed their gold, and that, though the protection was far more liberal than the children of Israel enjoyed elsewhere, there was no thought

of anything but toleration prompted by egotism. We have seen that the burghers did their best to drive them out of the towns, and that, though nobody thought of exterminating the Jews, everybody indulged in tormenting them. But it is only just to hear the other side of the question, and, by looking into the organisations, character and culture of the Jewish people, to see whether they were quite free from the accusations of separatism which the Poles brought against them, and which, ripened by the force of years, has attained such enormous proportions to-day.

It has been remarked that the history of the Polish Jews is contained in the annals of their *Kahals.* To a certain extent, inasmuch as every-day details make up the sum of history, this statement is true ; but the scribes who recorded them passed over the big events which have marked their sojourn with characteristic indifference, and were content to enter in the records of the lawsuits, complaints, elections and punishments which occupied the attention of the *Kahals.*

To-day the revolutionary spirit which prevails amongst the Hebrew masses has done much to undermine the influence of the Jewish Communes. But in the Middle Ages their authority was unchallenged and their influence universal. Established in order that the Jews might enjoy the privileges of self-government in their internal affairs, they were responsible for their actions to none but the *Wojewoda,* who received a fixed salary in return for his protection, and with whom the Jews were on

terms of friendship, which were cemented by the most lasting bond, that of mutual interest. On the one hand the Polish *Wojewodas* received gifts of wine and of money, a portion or even the whole of the sums paid into the Jewish court for fines, enjoyed the convenience of an army of Jews ready to run errands for themselves and their magnificent households, and of willing bankers to fill their ever-empty purses. The Jewish Communes, on the other hand, received the protection of the greatest magnates in the land, had control of their own affairs, free from the interference of the Christians, were assured that their schools, cemeteries and hospitals would be secure from the attacks of the hostile burghers and their *Kahals* supplied with a military guard to watch over their own prisoners, who were generally kept in the cellars under the synagogues until their term of punishment had expired.

The governing body of the Commune was the *Kahal*,[1] composed of from four to forty members according to the size and importance of the community. For instance, large Communes, such as those in Posen, Cracow, Lemberg and Vilno elected a *Kahal* of as many as forty members, smaller towns confined their number to thirty-four, whilst the Communes in the small settlements and villages were under the authority of six or eight men who were themselves responsible to the *Kahals* of the nearest large town. It is difficult to determine the

[1] The same term is still applied to the executive committees of the Jewish Communes. *See* Chapter on Communes.

exact nature and amount of authority these *Kahals* exercised, partly because the records of them are very meagre and partly because they were not all organised upon the same lines. But generally speaking the following rules applied to them all.

The *Kahal*, whether it consisted of forty persons or four, was divided into several groups, each group having its special functions to perform in connection with the administration, legislature, education and charity of the Commune. These groups were called commissions. The charitable commission attended to the maintenance of the Jewish hospitals, the care of the destitute and the burial of the poor. Another commission insured property against losses incurred by fire, attended to the cleanliness and order of the streets in the Jewish quarters, to the condition of water wells, to the accuracy of weights and measures, and to the preparation of food destined for consumption by the Jews. Another commission passed regulations as to dress and music, drew up marriage settlements, and settled conjugal disputes. The *Kahal* had control of the communal treasury, and levied taxes upon those members of the Commune who were able to pay for the maintenance of the poor, of hospitals, schools and cemeteries. But the most important part of their authority was the tribunal, which not only superintended the drafting and execution of written agreements, bills, contracts, marriage certificates, etc., but exercised all the functions of a criminal court, which was presided over

by a Rabbi and consisted of several judges (*dagamin*) in the large Communes.

In criminal cases, Rabbis, learned in the laws of Moses, judged according to them and put the verdict to the vote when opinion was divided as to the guilt of the accused or the measure of punishment to be meted out to him. The presiding judge, who was exempt from the payment of government taxes, always came from another Commune lest his judgment should be prejudiced. As he and his colleagues dispensed the sacred law which the Jews hold in such profound respect, the *Kahals* rapidly became despotic. They could banish an offender or a common enemy from the towns or Communes, deprive him of his liberty by keeping him imprisoned in the cellar of the synagogue guarded by the *Wojewoda's* soldiers, and impose fines at their pleasure. Little wonder that when, as will be seen, the greater part of the Jewish community, under the influence of the Rabbis, clung to its ancestral faith, traditions and prejudices, those who strove to free themselves from the shackles of superstition were forced to escape from the persecution of their co-religionists and take refuge in other countries; little wonder, too, that few found the courage to change their faith or trespass on any of the multitude of regulations which encompassed their lives in order to develop their intellectual endowments in any other direction than that laid down by the traditions of their race. They were powerless against the decision of the *Kahals*, for there was no appeal but

a special charter granted by the Polish King, which could not be executed without the concurrence of the Jewish judges.

When fairs and markets drew large numbers of Jews together for commercial purposes a special court went on circuit to the towns and tried cases of dispute then and there. The members of the *Kahal* were elected at the Feast of Passover, for the space of one year. The elective system varied considerably, but it is safe to assume that the whole of the community did not participate in the elections, which were performed by chosen delegates who were generally elected not by votes, but by casting lots. Not every Jew could aspire to the honour of becoming a member of the *Kahal.* Only those who were versed in the Law and the Talmud, who paid taxes, who owned house property or at least a large shop, and who had been long enough in the Commune to inspire the respect of their fellows, might aspire to that honour. When the elections were over the authority of the newly appointed *Kahal* was formally confirmed by the *Wojewoda* and entered upon its numerous duties. If one of the members was guilty of tardiness or carelessness in the execution of his duties or of irregularity in keeping the communal accounts, he was promptly fined and dismissed.

These two organisations, the Commune and the *Kahal,* did much to form the character of the Polish Jew. It preserved that respect and awe with which the Jewish masses regarded the office of Rabbi, and tended to

confirm them in their adherence to Hebrew culture and their antipathy to what the Polish Jews call "worldly" things. For it must not be supposed that the Polish Jew of the Middle Ages was merely a merchant and a usurer, that his life ended in the market-place, or his ambitions soared no higher than the driving of a good bargain and the extortion of the highest possible amount of interest. When the market was silent and the evening shades had fallen upon the Jewish quarter, the Hebrew's real life began. In his own house, excluded from the gaze of the curious, surrounded by the family whose ties he revered and loved with all the strength of his affectionate nature, he either listened as some Rabbi expounded the Scriptures or expounded them himself, telling of the great hope which was to come out of Israel and of the Messiah who was to lead them back to the Promised Land. All the worry of the world, the teasings and the petty persecutions, the struggle for existence and the care of the morrow were forgotten. But this almost fanatical love for his religious life, this blind obedience to the Rabbis and *Kahals* caused the Polish Jew to adopt a culture which removed him further and further from the Polish community.

It was the boast of the sons of Israel that, whilst many of the Poles were illiterate, all their children were taught to read and write, thanks to the abundance of their schools and the teaching afforded by the doctors of their synagogues.

In Poland the study and cult of the Talmud were far

above the standard preserved by the Jews of other nations, and was already famous as early as the twelfth century. From the middle of the sixteenth century, Cracow boasted a Hebrew printing press imported from Italy. The rich paid for the books which proceeded from it; the studious poor received them as gifts. The Jews of the town of Lublin possessed a school which drew Jewish scholars from Europe and even from Palestine; other towns, profiting by royal charters, established higher schools and set up printing presses. Askenazy (Eleazer ben Eliahar), Rabbi in the Commune of Posen, who died in 1586, spoke ten languages and spent his spare time in developing Judaism in Poland. Polish Jews were called upon to fill dignities amongst their co-religionists in other parts of Europe. Another Askenazy, Hillel ben Hire, was elected Rabbi of the Jewish Commune in Hamburg. Kaidanover, a Jew of Vilno, filled a similar post at Frankfort-on-Maine. The father of Hebrew bibliography, Szabtai-ben-Josef Bass was born in Kalisz. In the Ukraine the Jews were renowned for their skill in the art of healing, and more than one Jewish doctor had become court physician. But those who devoted themselves to secular study were few and far between. It was the cult of the Talmud which chiefly occupied them.

In the early part of the sixteenth century the ecclesiastical authorities protested against Jewish children attending schools in which Christians were taught, but the jewish Synod urged their co-religionists to study secular

works in spite of this restriction, since they had their own schools supported by the proceeds of special taxes levied by the *Kahals*. Their manifesto points out that :—"The study of the Holy Scriptures cometh first, but other lore should not be neglected; learn therefore, be of use to the King and to the magnates, and they will respect you. As the stars in heaven, as the sands of the sea, so is the number of the Jews in the world; but here they do not shine as stars, they are trodden upon by all, as upon sand. Why, then, can you not rise out of the trampled moss, even as the cedars of Lebanon?"

But the Talmudist culture of the Rabbis continued to hold the field at the expense of secular learning. True, we hear of some Polish Jews, disguised and under assumed names, at Pisa, where they had gone to study subjects the Rabbis forbade, but such cases were exceptional. The list of learned Jews who were born or lived in Poland during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contains 80 names, only seven of which belonged to men whose writings are of sufficient general interest to justify their translation into any European language. The Polish Jews appear to have fully appreciated the toleration with which they were treated; they were, as their writings testify, proud to call themselves "Polish." But the corrupted German jargon was never abandoned for the language of the country in their daily intercourse with each other, and their wise men wrote not in Polish, but in Hebrew, Latin or German.

This assiduous study of the Talmud and the Holy Scriptures led to frequent discussions and split the Polish Jews into many sects, which either obtained a very weak foothold or have been altogether unknown amongst their co-religionists in other countries.

It would be a long task to enter into the details of all these sects or of the cabalistic practices many of them resorted to, for, though causing much ado amongst the Hebrews themselves, their history would be of little interest to the general reader. But three are worthy of brief notice: the one because it gained numerous adherents amongst the Jews of Russia and Poland, the other because its activity has not tired to the present day, and the third because it led to the formation of a society whose members finally became baptized and joined the Roman Catholic Church. The members of the first sect are known as Karaims; the second as Chassideens, and the third as Sabbatajans.

The Karaims were those who brought Hebrew civilisation to the Crimean Peninsula and sent their delegates to Vladimir the Great of Kieff, when it was rumoured that the Razan Prince intended to change his faith. Mordchaj-ben-Nisan, a learned Polish Jew, wrote the history of his sect at the instigation of Jacob Trigland, Professor and Rector of Leyden University in 1698.

The Karaims (from Heb. *Gara*, to read) reject the teaching of the Talmud and accept only that which is contained in the books of the Old Testament. They are sometimes called the Protestants of Judaism, and

attach more importance to the moral and practical side of their religion, rejecting the letter in favour of the spirit of the Law. Their bitterest enemies are the Rabbis, whose authority they have long since rejected. In the seventeenth century they enjoyed the special protection of Jan III. of Poland, who allowed them to live in all the towns in the republic without any restrictions whatever. Some authorities affirm that this privilege was accorded as a mark of respect for one of the Karaims, a certain Abraham Ben Samuel, renowned for his learning; others attribute it to a hope on the King's part, that many of the liberal-minded sectarians would embrace Christianity. There are no records that this hope, if it existed, was realised.

The Chassideens (from Heb. *Chassidim*, pious) were revived in Poland at about the middle of the eighteenth century, by Israel Baal Schem, whose birth is said to have been predicted by the prophet Elias, and whose mother was a hundred years old at the time. He was an adept at cabalistic practices, and fought with demons and evil spirits at an early age. His doctrines were preserved in manuscript until the nineteenth century, when they were published in book form: they are a strange mixture of moral precepts, ridiculous tales of apparitions and mystic interpretations. The original Chassideens were enthusiasts who renounced all the pleasures of this world, spending their time in prayer, reflection and self-imposed corporal punishment in order to expiate their sins and hasten the advent of the Messiah. They

studied cabalistic books and emaciated the body by fasts and vigils in order to release their souls from the flesh and absorb themselves in God. But the Chassideens whom Israel Baal Schem drew around him were much less severe in the mode of their living. He taught that the union with God can only be effected by contemplation, that mortification of the flesh is deleterious to this desirable attitude of mind, which can only be attained by enjoying all lawful pleasures of the senses and thereby rendering them their natural vigour. The sects gained many adherents, and spread to the Jews in Galicia, Walachia, Moldavia and Hungary. As they were respected more for their piety than their intellectual superiority, they attacked secular learning as unnecessary and even injurious. To-day, as then, they are bitterly opposed to the perusal of worldly books, even when written in Yiddish. They also object to the teaching of Polish in the communal schools. They raid Jewish houses and search for secular literature, promptly confiscating any which they find. These expeditions generally take place on Friday evenings, when the merchants and traders have leisure for reading. I remember one poor Jew complaining to me that his daughter, a pretty girl of fourteen or fifteen and the proud owner of two thick plaits of hair, was surprised whilst reading a "worldly" book by some Chassideens of the neighbourhood, who promptly quenched her thirst for secular knowledge by emptying a pot of pitch over her head. When they know of the existence of a

library or collection of secular books in the settlement, they set spies to find out its whereabouts, thus making it impossible for their broader-minded co-religionists to profit by the little store of literature, for the simple reason that they do not dare to fetch the books lest they should betray the secret of their hiding-place.

Notices forbidding the Jews to read worldly literature are posted up in the "Betharmidrasz," or houses where the young Jews abandon themselves entirely to the study of the Talmud, often leaving their wives in order to do so. The Russian Government sometimes steps in, raids the Betharmidrasz, arrests those found upon the premises, and imposes a fine upon the president.

It will be observed that if the Polish community were indifferent to the economic and civil possibilities of the Jewish strangers amongst them, the strangers themselves, owing to their character, organisations and culture, tended to hold aloof from the rest of the population. Which side is the more to blame the reader must decide for himself; but the above facts are those which, worked into the private and national life of the Poles and Jews, produced a problem and an antagonism which increased as time went on. It was impossible but that the Polish Jews, immersed in cabalistic lore and buried in the study of the Talmud, should have flocked to the side of the notorious pseudo-Messiah and impostor, Sabbataj—Cevi of Smyrna. Many of them afterwards paid allegiance to a leader who, once an

adherent of Sabbataj, abused the confidence of many in order to obtain his own selfish ends, and after living as a Jew and a Turk, finally embraced the Christian faith. But the story of his adventures, impostures and ambitions must be reserved for the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

FRANK AND HIS FOLLOWERS

THE ravages of Cossack hordes about the middle of the seventeenth century drove many Jews from Poland to the domains of the Turkish Sultan, where, wearied and almost hopeless, they listened eagerly to the doctrines of a pseudo-Messiah, Sabbataj Cevi, who was to put an end to their sufferings and lead them back to the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey. The homage this man received from the Jews in Smyrna aroused the jealousy of the reigning Sultan, Mahomed IV., who forced him to embrace the faith of Islam. But his Hebrew followers still continued to believe in him, and when he died (1676) others adopted his doctrines, which denied those of Judaism, with the exception of the rite of circumcision, and rejected all of the Old Testament but the "Song of Songs." He professed to believe in the cabalistic book of "Zoar," in a Trinity consisting of a Highest Cause, a Messiah and a *Matronita*, and in the transmigration of souls, by which all the heroes of Israel were but various forms of the same personality.

These doctrines were discussed wherever Jews lived,

and nowhere so eagerly as in Poland, where the Rabbis did all in their power to prevent the influence of this new sect from spreading amongst their flocks. But its success was considerable there, nevertheless, as the Jews had been suffering from poverty, heavy taxation and oppression which had reduced them to a state of misery that inclined them to dream of a Messiah to release them. Amongst these was one Frank, a Jew of humble origin, whom the vicissitudes of life had driven at an early age to Smyrna, and whose ambitious mind saw possibilities in the new sect which would, if properly used, afford him the means of gratifying those luxurious tastes which are inherent in the Hebrew. After spending some years in Turkey and assisting in the orgies in which those who still professed the faith of Sabbataj Cevi indulged, Frank returned to the land of his birth, where he speedily converted several Jews to the tenets of Christianity. This fact and his own mode of life drew the censure of the Rabbis upon him; and rumours of strange practices, in which nude men and women danced round him, singing extracts from the "Song of Songs," caused the Jews of the Podolian settlement in which he lived to break into his house one night and arrest him and his companions upon a charge of spreading principles and practices contrary to the teachings of the Talmud. Then it was that Frank, seeing the Jews were thoroughly aroused against him, openly expressed his intention of joining the Roman Catholic Church, and applied to the neighbouring landowners to protect him

from the persecutions of his own people, and to arrange a solemn meeting between himself and the Rabbis to discuss the Talmud and the falsity of its doctrines.

The Polish Bishops appear to have been favourably inclined to this proposal, and, as if to clinch the bargain, some twenty-five of Frank's adherents were publicly received into the fold of the Church of Rome. These neophytes published a manifesto dictated by the Consistory of Podolia, in which they declared that the Talmud was a blasphemous book, and that the one true creed was that which professed belief in the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

A meeting of the nature of that which the Polish Bishops finally arranged between Frank and the Rabbis, and in which judgment was given in favour of the contra-Talmudists, as Frank and his followers were called, was contrary to the laws of Poland. According to them no civil or religious dispute between Jew and Jew could be judged by a Pole. Such differences as the creed of the Hebrew entailed were to be settled before the Jewish *Kahal*, and the *Kahal* alone had the right to pronounce judgment in the dispute between Frank and the Rabbis who flocked from far and wide, from Poland, Lithuania and Russia, to defend the Talmud and protest against Frank's teaching and mode of life. But it appears that the Bishop of Podolia was too dazzled by the prospect of converting the now famous Frank, and too pleased at having already been, as he supposed, the means of converting five-and-twenty of his adherents, to trouble

himself about legal formalities. After the meeting had lasted eight days, judgment was given in favour of Frank, and the Talmud publicly burned.

But Dembovski, Bishop of Podolia, died shortly after this extraordinary meeting, in which Bishops and Rabbis sat side by side to discuss a point of Jewish law, and Frank's position rapidly changed. As he and his adherents—except twenty-five neophytes—had not publicly and ceremoniously embraced Christianity, the Church did not extend her protection to them. They were jealously excluded from the Jewish Commune as contra-Talmudists. The generality of the population looked askance at a man who was neither a Pole nor a Jew—who wore a green turban, who lived like a Turk and kept a harem, who was supposed to have embraced Islamism, who, though having no visible means of subsistence lived in luxury, and was in short a mystery to Jew and Pole alike. Before long the Orthodox Jews, or Talmudists, persecuted him to such an extent that he was obliged to leave the country and take refuge in Stamboul, where he was joined by a small party of Jews from Poland. Here he remained until the new King of Poland, Augustus III., who was much under the influence of those courtiers with whom Jewish assimilation had become a fashionable fad, issued an order by which the contra-Talmudists received the protection of the general laws (1788). A few months later Frank returned to Poland, where he began to play the rôle of apostle. His followers contributed to his treasury, his

house became more luxurious than ever, whilst his adherents were half-starved and in rags. But he saw visions and performed miracles, he cured the sick, he prophesied, he expounded the mysteries of the book of Zoar; he wrote wise sayings and preached them. Hundreds of poor Jews rushed to him, giving up their meagre earnings that he might pass his days in his harem and his nights in mysterious orgies. It is difficult to say what attracted these poor wretches to this man, whether it was that love of show which is so strong in the Hebrew, or the hope of bettering their position by following a man who was, or had been, on friendly terms with Polish magnates and bishops, or whether it was the personality of Frank, who, with his melodious voice and glowing rhetoric, kindled the hope of future happiness in the breasts of men and women who knew of nothing but misery on earth. Whatever may have been the reasons which impelled his followers to defy the hostility of the Orthodox Jews, it is certain that he taught them, crudely enough, it is true, some of the tenets of Christianity. Whence he derived them, without a knowledge of Polish, it is difficult to say, but the following words, which are his, prove that he was not altogether devoid of poetic fancy.

"He who would be attached to the living God must have faith with all good works towards people and God, and do good to every one, as far as in him lies the responsibility. Although temptation come upon him, he must be firm of spirit, turning neither to the right

nor to the left. If he do this, the good God will strengthen and enlighten his heart, and he will attain to the rank of a true man."

"I will show you God, for in me are power and strength, and me hath God chosen."

"The time will come when you will count my steps, seek my footprints, yea, and kiss the soles of my feet."

"If you will listen to and obey my commands, you will come to great gain, which neither your grandfathers nor your great-grandfathers attained to."

Frank does not seem to have told his followers what this "great gain" was to be; but his pomp, his promises, and his precepts soon increased their numbers to such an extent that a strange phenomenon appeared in the Polish Republic—that is, a large community, ruled by an adventurer who preached doctrines opposed to the political and religious creeds of his adopted country, and calculated to found a sect tending to be hostile to the Republic. His infant daughter Eve was already spoken of in this community as something superhuman. His general mode of life provoked the hostility of the Jewish Rabbis to such an extent that they managed to subject his followers to many petty persecutions, in spite of the royal decree issued for their protection. Finally, in 1759, Frank was obliged to seriously consider whether it would not be better to embrace Christianity, and he wrote to the Bishop of Lvov (Lemberg) and to the King asking to be baptised. The Bishop did not receive his

request with enthusiasm, neither did the Papal Nuncio, who considered that Frank's proposal was an excuse, and that he only wanted the King's protection in order that his followers might ply profitable trades and supply him with the means of living in luxurious ease, and of ruling over his community. On receiving permission to be baptized, Frank again asked the Polish Bishops to assist at a conference with the Talmudists. Many Poles thought this was to gain time and obtain equal civil rights without embracing Christianity. But the conference took place in the Cathedral of Lemberg; the Jewish Communes of Russia and Poland sent delegates, and the aristocracy of Poland flocked to hear Rabbis argue in a Roman Catholic Cathedral. The conference lasted from the 8th of July till the 10th of September. Frank appeared late in the day, driving into Lemberg with all the pomp of an Oriental potentate; though the plague brought by his miserable adherents raged in the town for weeks afterwards. He was warned by the ecclesiastical dignitaries not to drive about in his gorgeous coach, as such pomp was unbecoming in one who lived upon alms. His followers, blinded by his splendour, gave him their last mite, and would have starved but for the charity of the Poles. The priests did their best to persuade Frank to be baptized, promising that if he and some of his chosen adherents would consent to a simple ceremony, they would be permitted to proceed to Warsaw, to be there received into the Roman Catholic Church with all due pomp. At last

he consented, and was baptized in the Cathedral of Lemberg. Thirteen men, six women, and ten children followed his example. Frank received the name of Joseph. Shortly afterwards he was again baptized in the Chapel Royal in Warsaw with all the ceremony of Roman Ritual. Between 1759 and 1760, 540 of his adherents followed his example. This was the first occasion on which so many Jews in Poland have embraced Christianity, and it is doubtful if this number has ever been exceeded within a space of twelve months. The question now arose what was to be done with these neophytes.

As such, they would no longer come under the control of laws and privileges relating to Jews, and would suffer persecution from Orthodox Jews. They were not men of culture or education. Even their leader could not speak or write the Polish language. As they were of humble origin and great poverty, it was clearly the duty of the Republic to make some provisions for them. The Papal Nuncio at Warsaw, Serra, has left much valuable information on this subject.

A certain number of Polish magnates offered to receive the neophytes on their country estates. But Frank had other aspirations, and demanded a grant of separate territory near the Turkish frontier, where he could freely exercise his influence upon his adherents and form a separate state, independent of the Polish Republic. The Nuncio, who was strongly opposed to granting this demand, pointed out that Frank, once in possession of

such a colony, would tend to destroy the country's peace, and that keeping the Frankists upon charity would rapidly turn them into a band of vagabonds. The question was eagerly discussed at court. A large party agreed with Serra that the neophytes should be given a settlement in the centre of Poland, to avoid all possibility of intrigue with foreign powers. Frank was assured that the neophytes and their children would be well cared for by the benevolent; but he rejected this proposal on the grounds that his adherents would, if distributed about the country, fall into the state of serfdom. At last it was proposed that those neophytes who had been born in Poland (the Papal Nuncio described them as Neofiti Polacchi) should be allowed to settle in the cathedral cities, which the Polish Jews had not been allowed to enter, and in the so-called royal cities in order that they might be able to earn a living by engaging in trade and crafts. As to those from Moldavia and Hungary, who had flocked to Frank's standard in considerable numbers, their leader asked that they might be allotted a separate settlement. Some of the Polish magnates attempted to persuade the King to grant them crown lands in Lithuania which brought in but small revenues. In return for them the neophytes were to pay taxes and support judges and priests; to take upon themselves, in fact, all the civil responsibilities of a Christian community.

Frank promised the King that if he would grant his adherents a settlement, tens of thousands of Jews would

embrace Christianity and settle in Poland, become good patriots, and do much to restore the tottering Republic to its former position amongst the countries of Eastern Europe.

But meanwhile the Papal Nuncio, who, with the exception of a Lemberg priest named Mikulski, seems to have been the only person to take any active steps to verify the sincerity of Frank's intentions, had been making enquiries both amongst the Frankists and in Turkey. His labours were not unrewarded. The priest learnt from a few ignorant Frankists in Lemberg that they believed Frank was Christ, and that the end of the world was approaching. He drew up a written statement to this effect dictated by six Frankists—two of whom were incapable of signing their names in any language—and sent copies of it to Warsaw. Their statement is not astonishing when we remember that, as most of the Frankists did not know Polish and could not receive instruction from the priests, their only knowledge of the principles of Christianity was derived from Frank himself, and Frank was too fond of power and homage to lose any opportunity of gaining the adoration and respect of his adherents. The Nuncio obtained information of his antecedents from the Bishop of Nicopol. He also learned from a Frankist that the whole sect subscribed to keep the "master" and "fifty favourites," that he and the favourites met on certain days in the week to sing chants in the Jewish jargon and observe certain rites and ceremonies which cannot be mentioned here, and which

appeared to the Nuncio, to quote one of his Despatches, *un culto religioso ed esterno.* Serra did not hesitate to communicate all he had learned to the King, who simultaneously received news from Lemberg to the effect that the newly baptized Frankists were practising polygamy and other Turkish customs. Frank, who was in the habit of driving about Warsaw in a sledge driven by three horses harnessed tandem-fashion, to the admiration of the crowds which collect so easily in the Polish capital, suddenly fell from a hero to an impostor, and he was seized and imprisoned, first behind the grill in the Church of the Bernardines, afterwards in the monastery at Bielany in the neighbourhood of Warsaw. After a short time he was brought before the Consistory of Warsaw, charged with practising secret ceremonies and believing in the transmigration of souls and other doctrines contrary to those of the Roman Church. He denied that the Frankists practised polygamy, and, whilst admitting that he had embraced Islamism, said he had done so in order to escape the persecution of the Jews. When asked how he knew whether his adherents were prepared for baptism, he replied that when he saw a light over the head of a Jew or Jewess who wished to be baptized he allowed them to do so, and that when there was no light he forbade them to embrace Christianity. After the examination he was sent to the fortress of Czenstochova awaiting the decision from Rome, so that he could not exercise his influence upon his adherents, who, after being put through

their cathechism by means of an interpreter, were dismissed.

Frank remained a prisoner in the fortress of Czenstochova for thirteen years. This fortress, which was at once a stronghold and a monastery of the Polish Brotherhood, has played a most picturesque part in Polish history. In the year 1685 the fortress, meagrely garrisoned and led by the Abbot Kordecki, had heroically sustained a siege against the Swedes; to this day its magnificent church, which contains the miraculous picture of the Holy Virgin brought from Constantinople, is the Mecca of pious Poles.

When Frank was sent thither the garrison consisted of 80 decrepit soldiers and a few officers. Their commandant was the Abbot, to whom, by an observance which had pertained from the days of the heroic Kordecki, the keys were rendered every evening. The veterans were not averse to receiving bribes, and although Frank was sent under their care in order that his adherents might not be influenced by him, it was not long before he managed to receive some of his followers, whose visits frequently lasted several days. His influence soon began to exert itself over them. They settled in the neighbourhood of the monastery in large numbers, and before he had been there two years his wife shared his prison with him. Delegates sent by the Frankists at Lemberg and Warsaw held councils with him. Ceremonies of the nature of those held in the Podolian settlement became of frequent occurrence. A company of fourteen

"Brethren" and as many "Sisters" used to take walks on the ramparts of the fortress and listen to Frank's harangues. Indeed, if it were not for the evidence of this man's private chronicle, it would be difficult to believe that such scenes were enacted in a fortress where he was a prisoner. He taught his adherents the principles of a communism completely at variance with the laws of the Republic. He practised ceremonies which had absolutely nothing in common with the Christian religion or the ordinary ethics of European morality. With his approbation, nay, at his instigation, polyandry and polygamy were practised to an extent which broke the family ties of his "company."

From this "chronicle" we gather that Frank was a man of a passionate and cynical nature, who satisfied the lowest instincts under the cloak of exalted ideals and aims. His bad example was eagerly imitated by his disciples, whom such a mode of life, free from all restraints which commonly bind society together, pleased, and who became more and more dependent upon their leader's caprices.

In spite of these orgies, the "company's" outward life was in accordance with the regulations of the monastery. As Christians the Frankists fulfilled them all. They attended the church, went to confession, and partook of the Church's most solemn Sacrament. But they did this, not from conviction, but for the mere form, for fear that the priests would suspect them of their sectarian practices. It was here that Frank first began to teach

those of his adherents who visited him, the cult of "Our Lady," that is, of his daughter AWACZA. By the time he was released from the fortress they had grown so accustomed to this cult that she was regarded by them as superhuman.

After five years' "imprisonment" Frank wearied of Czenstochova, and though he assured the good abbot that all Jews should be baptized, he began to seriously consider how he might extend his influence to the Russian Jews and convert them to the Greek Church. The Poles were too occupied with the presence of a Russian army on their borders to think about the converted Jew in Czenstochova, and when he sent delegates to a Russian bishop who chanced to be in Warsaw on business, only the Jews knew of his plans. They immediately apprised their co-religionists in Moscow that Frank was trying to get released from his Polish prison by Russian command, in return for a promise to convert the Polish and Russian Jews to the Greek Church, and to use Poland's weak situation for his own ends. Their prompt action frustrated him; his delegates, who promised that twenty thousand Jews would enter the Greek Church as soon as their master was free, were sent out of Moscow, and Frank remained in Czenstochova until the year 1773, when the fortress capitulated to the Russians, and he, regaining his liberty, proceeded to Warsaw.

There he appears to have dreamed of new influence and power, for in a letter addressed to a certain

acquaintance in Podolia he urges him to "force all Jews to the front." But the Russians, who were now masters of that part of the Polish territory, first imprisoned the delegates and then sent them across the frontier. In Warsaw Frank was not more fortunate. His old adherents had done well in trade and commerce, and were unwilling to embark upon new enterprises. They seemed in fact anxious to be rid of their "master," who had just received an invitation from the followers of Sabbataj Cevi in Moravia to join them. They promised to send him money, but the well-to-do refused to accompany him. Seeing that his rôle in Poland was finished, he left it for Moravia, never to return, with these words:—

"Because you have blasphemed, I must leave this country, which is God's inheritance. . . . It is the land which was promised to the Patriarchs. Even if all the countries upon earth filled with precious stones were given me, I would not leave Poland, for it is the inheritance of God, and the inheritance of our forefathers."

He lived in Moravia in great pomp at the expense of the Frankists in Poland until his death in the year 1791. His daughter Eve lived until 1816.

So much for Frank. It is now time to consider his adherents. What manner of men were they, who at his instigation became nominally at least Christians, and who whilst contributing to the maintenance of their "master" gradually drifted away from him? What

influence did they exert upon the Polish community at the time and afterwards?

Their fate is the more interesting because they were the first Polish Jews to embrace Christianity in any large number. True, Jews had been converted before, and having enjoyed the especial protection of a Polish magnate had flourished, intermarried with the Polish element, and gradually assimilated to such an extent that only the curious who seek the documentary evidence of dusty archives knew that their forefathers once belonged to the despised race of Israel. But such cases had been few and far between. Frank happened to be born when the once powerful Republic of Poland was beginning to fall; he lived when men who observed the signs of the times asked themselves with consternation what the morrow would bring forth. At such periods all fanatical movements, all phases of social or political excitement find favour; for men, seeing that their country's case is hopeless, that grave changes are taking place, are ready to catch at any straw, at any myth, which may stave off the evil day. This is the secret of Frank's success with the Poles. There were those at the court of Augustus III. who believed that the assimilation of the Jews would build up a new Polish race which would defy the triple enemy composed of Germany, Austria and Russia. They did not stop to ask themselves whether Frank's intentions were sincere, whether the Jews who followed him were prepared to accept their new faith, whether the movement would extend

to any appreciable extent. They rushed into the idea as the Pole rushes into all ideas, with enthusiasm but without reflection. There were others who protected the Frankists from purely religious motives, believing that every baptized Jew was a soul rescued from the clutches of hell. On the other hand there was a large party who thought with the Papal Nuncio, Serra, that Frank was nothing but an ambitious impostor, eager to obtain a grant of land near the Turkish or Russian frontiers for himself and his adherents, in order to satisfy his passion for power and intrigue, and to play a profitable rôle in the political drama which was then being enacted in Eastern Europe.

The Frankists who embraced Christianity did so for two reasons. First because their "master," who exerted an extraordinary amount of influence upon his adherents, ordered them to do so, secondly, because, being men and women of the poorest class of Jews, they could lose nothing thereby, and might, by embracing the national faith of the country in which they lived, enjoy privileges which would enable them to engage in profitable trades. As Frank had the protection of the Government, Jewish persecution could not touch them. Besides, they were allowed as neophytes to settle in towns which were closed to the Jews. The advantage of their situation was obvious. Placed in the midst of a Polish population, of a population averse to business and of small business capacity, free from Hebrew competition, they enjoyed opportunities which their brethren might well envy.

Their baptism placed them on a slightly higher social plane than they occupied before. According to their baptismal registers they received surnames derived from the government or town from which they came, with the Polish termination *ski*. Their godparents, who were for the most part magnates and dignitaries, extended protection in the form of pecuniary assistance or the permission to settle in the towns and villages under their rule. But their increasing prosperity soon awoke the jealousy of the Polish burghers, and public opinion grew so strong against the Frankists that after the death of Augustus III. in 1763 the question of limiting their privileges was brought before the Diet of Warsaw. From the reports of their deliberations it appears that many of the neophytes had obtained lucrative posts in public offices. Some had even been ennobled, because, owing to the general laxity with which laws were executed, a Lithuanian law was applied to the neophytes in Poland proper. By this law a Jew or Jewess who embraced the Christian faith was counted a *szlachcic*, and was entitled to all the rights and privileges of the Polish nobles. The murderer of a converted Jew was punished by the same laws which applied to the murder of Christians. So carelessly was the law executed, that a Jew baptized in Lemberg in 1789 figured as a noble in Lublin a couple of months later, though neither Lemberg nor Lublin was within the area of Lithuanian jurisdiction. Owing to the efforts of the Papal Nuncio, who did his best to prevent the neophytes from settling near the frontiers,

many Frankists had gone to Lithuania, where they became noble and gradually acquired landed estates. The Diet of Warsaw which assembled in May 1769 passed a decree ordaining that not only Frankists, but all neophytes should sell their land within the space of two years, under pain of confiscation. This decision was modified in the case of forty-eight distinguished neophytes, who assimilated so perfectly with the local nobility that all trace of their Jewish origin had long been lost.

Not so with those who were not ennobled, or who had not acquired land in Lithuania. With the exception of twenty-three neophytes whom the new King, Stanislaus Augustus, ennobled in order to replenish his purse, the Frankists remained a people apart. Their exclusiveness and their immunity from taxation, their intercourse with and large donations to Frank in Moravia, and most of all perhaps their comparative competence, aroused the indignation of the small Polish tradespeople, an indignation which resulted in the publication of several lampoons and pamphlets which are the more interesting because, after a lapse of over a century, many of the charges therein cited are brought by the anti-Semitic portion of the Polish community against the neophytes of to-day. In them the Frankists are charged with keeping apart from the rest of the population, and from failing to adopt the culture, customs and ideas, of the people whose faith they have adopted. The author of

one, in describing a Frankist christening-party to which he was invited, complains that the table was arranged after the Jewish fashion, that all the guests but himself were of a pronounced Hebrew type, that the Frankists do not apprentice their children to crafts, that they intermarry with other neophytes, and that they are only professed Christians. All who have ever conversed with modern Poles about neophytes must be familiar with these remarks.

To-day it is difficult to say whether their assimilation is complete. If a Polish name, Polish aims and patriotism, the use of the Polish language and the profession of the Roman Catholic faith mean assimilation, then the answer must be in the affirmative. But if by assimilation we mean that the Polish population have forgotten their Jewish origin, that their racial characteristics have been entirely eradicated, that the Poles make no distinction between them and men whose forefathers were Poles and Roman Catholics, then we are bound to admit that the process of assimilation has not yet been completed, and that Poland is still watching the effects of an extraordinary movement, originated by a remarkable man whose ambitions and schemes raised him from the hovel of a Jewish settlement to a princely state in Moravia.

Before leaving him it may interest the reader to read some extracts from his *Book of Words.*

"Jacob said: How terrible is the place wherein God

is. He was mistaken. Where God is, there is nothing terrible, but before God, before the place of His abode, is great terror."

"He who is worthy to approach God Himself will receive in that place which is by God wisdom which is seven, nay, eight times greater than the wisdom of Solomon."

"There is one place in the sea where fish of pure gold hide themselves, but none can catch them, for the danger thereof is too great."

"There are roses which grow upon the islands of the sea. The man who can reach them and gather them will live a thousand years. The gods created great ignorance wherewith to cover these islands, so that none can find them."

"No country fears the Judgment Day as much as Poland, for the foundation of everything is Jacob and Esau."

"How can it be that the true God made this world in which one must die, and where so much is lacking? From this I gather that He who created the world was not the true God indeed."

"God Himself cannot be approached without money."

PART III

THE FUTURE OF THE POLISH JEW

CHAPTER

SOME JEWISH CUSTOMS

Religious Conservatism

Somewhere in the Talmud there is a story setting forth not only the necessity but the expediency of keeping the fifth commandment. According to it, the father of the family was asleep with his feet on the box when a man entered the house and proposed some business to the son. But the money which was necessary for the transaction was in the box, and the son, afraid to break the commandment by waking his father, sent the man away. Both father and son were in great distress about losing such a good opportunity, but the next day they were rewarded by a visit from another man with a still better offer. This time the father was awake, the box opened, and a large profit made. Both father and son attributed it to a sign of divine pleasure that the commandment had been kept, even under such great temptation. This reminds me of a far more recent story in connection with a pious Jewish family in Lodz. One Friday evening, just as the Sabbath had begun, a telegram arrived, and although the head of the house had good reason to believe that it was a business

offer from a foreign firm, refused to open it, in spite of the assurances of a visitor that it was no sin to read telegrams on the Sabbath. Next morning, Saturday, another telegram came, and again the visitor assured his host that, as the Law said nothing about telegrams, he would not break the Sabbath if he saw what was inside it. But his host was obdurate, and the family spent the day in speculations. On Saturday evening a third telegram arrived, and as the Sabbath was over the old merchant opened all three. His triumph was great when he read them, for the first contained a good offer, the second a better, and the third an excellent one, all from the same firm, who, supposing that the Jew did not answer because he did not think the offer good enough, had raised it each time. "You see," the old man said to his visitor, "the Law says nothing about telegrams, but the God of Israel has rewarded my piety with much gold! He who keeps the commandments shall ever prosper."

The religious conservatism of the Polish Jew is quite remarkable; and he shows it not only in the purely religious part of his customs, but in the traditional ones which have been instituted by the Talmud. To him it stands in the place of fatherland and nationality. Tell the really pious Polish Jew that his co-religionists in France or England have ceased to differ from the rest of the community in dress, speech and general mode of life, and he will retort that they are no longer Jews but freethinkers, who have deserted their faith, and only go

to the synagogue and eat *koszerny* out of affectation and a wish to be talked about. In his opinion, such men are not worthy to be called the sons of Israel. This conservatism causes an unlimited amount of friction between the old generation of the ghetto and the young, for the old looks upon the study of the Talmud as the only fit occupation for a pious Jew, and thinks of all modern ideas of a secular education with horror. It is difficult to understand the amount of consternation a young Polish Jew can cause among his family, especially the father be a Chassideen, by exchanging his long *halat* for a short coat of ordinary European cut and clipping his beard. It is quite equal to the feeling of shame experienced by a respectable English household if a son disgraces the family honour by forging somebody else's name. Hours spent in arguing with the unhappy parents fail to convince them that a boy does not merit being turned out of the house because, having learned the Talmud off by heart, he wants to read "worldly" books and get some idea of people and things around him. The fact that the same boy takes off his *halat* and puts on an ordinary coat when he goes abroad on business does not alter their views in the least. "He *must* take off his *halat* when he goes abroad, because he would look different from everybody else," they say.

"Then why on earth should he look different from everybody else when he is in Warsaw, or Radom, or Lodz?" the uninitiated asks.

"Because he is a Jew," is the reply. "And a Jew

must be different from everybody else. When my son has a *halat*, he will not walk in the gardens and parks for fear the police will search him."

"And why shouldn't he walk there if he wants to?"

"Why should he?" is the indignant retort. "His father never walked in the public gardens, and there is no reason why he should begin. Besides, if he leaves off his *halat* he will be going into the Polish cafés and eating *tryfny* food (not prepared according to the Jewish ritual), and then he will be utterly lost, and what will there be for us but shame and dishonour? We would not mind if he would wear a short coat under his *halat* for the sake of appearances. But he won't do that. What will all our friends and acquaintances say when they see him without his beard and his *halat?* I always told his father he would go wrong, that boy, for he's twenty-one, and won't hear of getting married."

Then follows a torrent of reproaches and real Hebrew despair for the prodigal son who wears a short coat and walks in the public gardens. As to the boy, he mourns the loss of the family circle from which he has been banished; being a Jew, he is sincerely attached to his home. But he borrows Polish books, and probably goes to lodge in a Christian household. To sympathisers he will confide his wish to learn something more than the Talmud can teach him, so as to become a "man" instead of a Jew in a long *halat*. In a short time he will either get baptized, or, what is far more likely to-day, become a Socialist and a freethinker. His parents will continue

to mourn him as worse than dead and hang their heads before their friends, who point out the scapegrace to their own sons as an example of the horrible fate which overtakes boys who read Polish books and refuse to marry.

The Young Rabbi

These Conservative Separatists, though dying out in the large towns, still flourish in the provincial settlements, where the *Kahals* are as averse to progress as the rest of the community. Their one ideal is the cult of the Talmud; and in order to devote their lives to that, they will starve themselves and their children, walk in rags and live in close, filthy hovels. Their ambition is to have a Rabbi for a son. He need not be such a Rabbi as those employed in the communal synagogues in the large towns. Far from it; the average provincial Jew looks upon those men who can speak and even write Polish with the utmost horror. By a Rabbi they mean a "master," that is a boy or man who knows the Talmud off by heart and can engage in controversy with other Rabbis, and vanquish their arguments about some question with a passage which puts it in quite another light.

The grave boys one sees in the ghettoes, walking book in hand to a Bethamidrasz, are either *Rabbis* or prospective ones. From their earliest years they have been excluded from all that could influence them in favour of

worldly things. They have been kept away from the streets in which they might hear Polish spoken, never allowed to play with other children, or be children themselves. They were encouraged to talk of nothing but the Bible and the Talmud, which they are taught to read as soon as their baby intellects are capable of understanding the Hebrew letters.

If such a boy be a promising pupil, he is admitted to the discussion of wise men at the age of eight, and listens to the words of wisdom which fall from the Rabbis' mouths, whilst his less fortunate or duller brothers and cousins look on with a mixture of awe and envy.

The Polish Jew is carefully instructed in the Law and Ritual, and at thirteen he becomes of age. He is received with ceremony into the synagogue when his father pronounces a prayer over him in which he declares that, whereas he has hitherto taken all his son's sins upon himself, he is no longer responsible for them from that moment. He is then taken before some Rabbi, who examines him as to his knowledge of the Talmud, and decides upon the amount of dowry his future bride must bring, according to the extent of his knowledge of the sacred book. The boy must now observe the fasts of the Jewish year and perform the same religious duties as his father and other pious men. He must pray many times a day, before and after all meals, as well as in the morning, late in the afternoon, and in the evening. If he breaks his fast by eating a small piece of bread, he says a short prayer, both before and after. If he sits

down to a meal, he must say a long prayer. The morning, afternoon and evening prayers are still longer; in fact, if a Polish Jew means to be really pious he has little time for anything but saying his prayers and observing the different laws and rules the Talmud has laid down for the guidance of every moment of his life. Once the other Rabbis in the community are satisfied that he is able to take part in their discussions, and once he can hold his own with these elders and discover some new explanation of an obscure passage in the Talmud, his future is assured. He need never work. The hated factory, the sweating shop, and all kinds of manual labour, are spared him. Even if he have no home of his own he will always find some pious household wherein to eat, drink, pray, and sleep on a bug-infested bed. He will instruct the boys of the family in the Talmud and be treated with unbounded respect; for all pious Jews will look up to him, and those who have given themselves over to secular things will not be admitted within his circle. No matter how ragged and dirty he is; no matter if he has no idea of anything outside the Talmud; if he is incapable of earning a farthing, he will be sought after by parents with daughters to marry, for he is a Rabbi, knows the Talmud off by heart, has a very long and dirty beard, and wears a *halat* to the ankles. If he goes on as he has begun, and has a roof and his daily food assured him, he may possibly become a very great Rabbi indeed, like the master of Gora Kalvarya (a settlement a few miles from Warsaw), who died a year

or two back full of years and honours. This Rabbi was known by the Jews throughout the Russian Empire. Thousands used to flock to hear him expound the Talmud. He was surrounded with a certain amount of pomp. Four servants, all wise and honourable men, waited upon him incessantly, and those who saw them say that a prince of the blood could not be better served than this Jew of a Polish village. He had his own councillor, a rich iron-founder from Warsaw, who used to go and advise him upon matters in connection with the management of his flock once every week. When a young Jew gave promise of great wisdom, he was taken to Gora Kalvarya. A man once told me that, having learnt the Talmud by heart at the age of thirteen, he was destined for a Rabbi and taken to see the wise man. One mark of favour was to receive a small piece of food from his own hands, and as he was breaking his fast, he gave the boy a piece of bread. The young Rabbi was in a predicament, for he had not yet said his morning prayer, and yet could not refuse to eat the bread the master had given. After vainly ransacking his memory for a passage in the Talmud to guide him, he determined to eat the bread and see what would happen. As he was not struck down by a terrible disease or otherwise punished for his sin, he began to make other experiments of the same kind, of course without saying anything to anybody. Before long he horrified his friends by declaring he would not be a Rabbi, took off his long *halat*, went abroad, learnt gardening, and finally became the

first skilled Jewish gardener in Poland. He taught two other Jews, and employs them in a Jewish cemetery. Needless to say, all the Conservatives in the Commune hold him in horror, and affirm that he is well punished because his two Jewish assistants brought revolutionary ideas among his non-Jewish workmen and organised a gardeners' strike.

Marriages

In the Polish ghetto a girl of twelve and a boy of thirteen must think of getting married. If the boy happen to be a Rabbi, or rather to give promise of becoming one, there is little difficulty about it; his parents will be besieged with offers from people who either have no sons of their own at all or else none with Talmudistic capabilities. When the boy happens to be an acknowledged Rabbi, he can generally ask whatever dowry he likes, for he is the best match in the settlement, and he knows it. After a suitable wife has been found the parents arrange about the dowry, which is paid, as soon as the engagement is completed, to the boy's parents. There are three separate copies of the contract, which is drawn up in such a way that the boy, his father and the girl's father must all agree to its withdrawal from whatever business it is invested in before the money can be touched. These contracts are placed in some Jewish bank, and the engagement is looked

upon as settled. If, however, it is broken off within the year, the bride must return any presents she has received, and the side which breaks off must pay all the costs of the betrothal. Any disputes which arise are tried before the *Kahal*, which pronounces judgment.

During the year of the engagement the betrothed pair do not see each other; in fact, they generally make each other's acquaintance on their wedding day, and whilst they are engaged the young man is supposed to solely frequent the society of his own sex. The parents make all arrangements, often without consulting their children.

When a Polish Jew marries one of his daughters his great idea is to get all the world to know about it. Now-a-days the announcement of a Jewish engagement often appears in the Polish papers, especially those in Jewish hands, which tell all it may concern that Icek Morning-star of Lodz is betrothed to Rachel Finechild of Radom, or words to that effect. But the Jew of the ghetto cares nothing for Polish papers—neither he nor his friends can read them; so he sticks to the good old custom of having the ceremony in front of the synagogue. As this is impossible in a large town, a courtyard is chosen instead. The religious part of the ceremony is the same as if it were held in a synagogue, but according to the Talmud any learned man can perform it. In fact, at one time no religious ceremony was necessary at all. It was sufficient for a boy to give a girl any trifle, such as

a small piece of money, or a piece of bread; if she accepted it, she was his wife. In cases where the girl had rich parents the custom was so much abused that witnesses were considered necessary to make a marriage valid, because a boy would go to his bride's parents and startle them with the news that he had married their daughter and was coming to live with them.

The orthodox ghetto marriage takes place in the evening, and by the light of lanterns which the chief guests hold. All the world and his wife are there; the bride's parents make every effort to astonish them with the richness of the reception and general arrangements, so that a family will be half starved for weeks before and after the wedding in order that the feast may include some dainty or a bottle of wine. The bride, with a cloth over her eyes, is brought by her parents into the courtyard where the ceremony is to take place and the bridegroom by his. The guests then sing and dance whilst the young couple make each other's acquaintance —that is, the bride's eyes are uncovered whilst somebody asks her if the young man pleases her. When she answers in the affirmative, her hair is shaved off close to her head, hops are thrown over her for prosperity, and the Rabbi performs the religious part of the ceremony, during which the bridegroom breaks a glass. After this, the marriage feast is eaten, the newly married pair being conducted thither with songs and noisy manifestations of joy.

After the feast the bride and bridegroom are conducted to a separate room and locked up in it for some time, whilst the guests dance and sing. When the Jews are very pious, the men and girls do not dance with each other; each sex has a part of the room to twirl round in to the accompaniment of music which has very little melody about it. The elder men stand in one group, looking on, and the women in another.

There is often a clause in the marriage contract which states the length of time the young pair is to live with the parents of each; but as a rule they live with the bride's parents until the father-in-law sees what the boy is fit for, whether he will be a Rabbi, a factor or a merchant, etc. It not unfrequently happens that a boy leaves his wife and children after he has been married a few years to live in one of the Bethamidrashes and study the Talmud, free from all domestic cares, or runs away from home to exchange his *halăt* for a short jacket and learn something of the world outside the ghetto. If his wife is of a pious stock she will not receive him into her father's house again, and a divorce is the usual consequence. Considering that such couples often have a family of half-a-dozen children before either is twenty-five, that they live with one and often two families of equal dimensions in one room, that they rarely get sufficient food to keep body and soul together, it is not surprising that the physical condition of the larger part of the Jewish emigrants leaves a great deal to be desired.

Shaving the Women's Heads

There is a difference of opinion about the origin of this custom. The Talmud says that when a woman is married she has no business to please any man, as her mission in life is fulfilled, and since a woman's hair is her beauty, she must hide it. The original order appears to have been to cover it with a close-fitting cap. But later on, as the material with which it was to be covered is not specified, the Polish Jewesses began to wear wigs on their shaved heads. Some old Jewesses wear close-fitting caps to-day. Of course the progressive Jews, even in the ghetto, do not make their wives shave their heads; all that are a little bit educated have dropped the custom altogether, and it is, like the very long *halats* of the men, a sign that the wearer belongs to a pious family. Another version of the origin is that a Jew must never have his hands soiled by grease, and that, as his wife's hair is greasy and he cannot always be washing his hands, the best way out of the difficulty is to make all brides shave their heads.

Position of Women

The position of the women in a pious Jewish household is rather paradoxical. A strict Jew will not sit down to eat with his wife or take food

from a woman's hands. In other households, less orthodox, the fathers and sons sit down first and are served by the women, who eat afterwards. In others again, the two sexes eat together, but the men sit on one side of the table and the women on another. Other distinctions are made. For instance, in the provincial settlements, the men and boys go to the "house of prayer," as the synagogues are there called, before the women and girls. In the large communal synagogues they attend the same service, but stand in different parts of the building. The men are exempt from bathing, unless they like it, but it is the business of the *Kahals* to see that women of the community observe the commands relating to the *mykva*, or ritualistic bath. On the other hand, the women take a small part in the religious life of the really pious Jewish household. They are not supposed to say many of the prayers; they do not wear the *tephilen*, or the Laws of Moses written on parchment and strapped on the head and arms, as the men do when praying on week-days. These *tephilen* are also fixed to the doors of their rooms. The origin of the custom will be found in Deuteronomy, ch. vi., which says: "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets before thine eyes. And thou shall write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

But at the Feast of Tabernacles, called *Kutki* in Poland, the women often take offerings of an apple, a piece of willow and of palm to the house of prayer.

During the seven days of this feast, which lasts from the fifteenth to the twenty-second of October, the Jews in the Polish ghettoes and settlements may be seen sitting in queer little tents usually made out of rags, with the top open to the sky or the ceiling of the room according to the state of the weather. The women often sit in them too. But in pious households, the men and women do not share the same tents. The days are passed in praying, and the food eaten there. This custom is observed as a reminder of the time when the Children of Israel were brought out of Egypt and had slept in tents in the wilderness. While the feast lasts the Jewish shops are shut and no work or business done, except for a few hours once or twice during the week, when it is a "free holiday," that is, one on which they can do a little buying or selling.

The Talmud allows a man to beat his wife if she curses him or makes light of his parents. The *Kahals* used to have the power of imprisoning a man who beat his wife wrongfully. To-day, they can only reason with, or, at the most, excommunicate him.

In practice, the domestic arrangements of the pious Jew work out rather differently. If he is progressive he does not keep so strictly to the laws laid down in the Talmud for the regulation of his home life, and will not hesitate to sit down at the same table with her, allow her to use his chair, etc.; whereas, if he be a pious man, devoted to the Talmud and the contemplation of its obscure teachings, his wife has to work for him and

their numerous children. Once in possession of the purse-strings, she rules the household, and not unfrequently relieves her feelings by throwing the wise man's soup at his head instead of letting one of her sons serve him with it. The wives of these Rabbis are generally hardworking, energetic women, and a Jewess who does a factor's work in one of the settlements, or hawks and sells things in the Jewish quarters, almost invariably has a pious husband at home or in some Bethamidrasz. Her children when old enough will help her, and as a rule the father wants for nothing as long as he lives, and the chances are ten to one that his first-born son will follow in his footsteps and find a wife to work for him. His happiest days are spent in waiting upon other wiser men, or giving advice upon important questions to some great Rabbi.

Divorce

According to the Talmud, polygamy is lawful; but the Rabbinats have long since altered this law, and now a man may not have more than one wife at a time. But it is very easy for him to get rid of her. The Law says, "When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes because he hath found some uncleanness in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house."

This means is very frequently used among the Jews in Poland and for trivial reasons, when a man is free of his father-in-law's roof and has grown tired of the wife his parents chose for him when he was thirteen. Often an irate husband will go to the communal Rabbinat and demand a writing of divorcement, as it is still called, because his wife gave him food with flies in it or put too much salt in his soup. The Rabbinat generally tries to dissuade the petitioner from his intention, but cannot legally refuse him the writing if he proves that his complaints are well grounded. Once in possession of the piece of parchment, all the husband has to do is to thrust it into his wife's hands or even throw it into her arms. When divorced, she is entitled to half of her dowry; but as the marriage contract is made out according to the religious law, and by this a dowry cannot exceed the equivalent to thirty pounds of English money, her husband is not obliged to give her back more than fifteen pounds. A widow is entitled to the same amount on the death of her husband. The Russian authorities do not make any difficulties about confirming the decision of the Rabbinat, and so divorce is excessively easy for the Polish Jew—though as a matter of fact cases are comparatively rare among the educated classes. But when a man, divorced in the above way, wishes to marry again, he must get the consent of the Rabbinat in order to do so, and this gives the latter a good deal of influence in petitions. If both sides wish to divorce, the matter is very simple indeed, and neither has any

difficulty about getting married again. A woman can get divorced from her husband against his will if she can prove that he engages in any dishonourable or objectionable trade which she did not know of before her marriage; if he is suffering from any objectionable disease; if his breath is unsavoury; if he often turns her out of the house; if he has a very bad temper; and lastly, if he beats her: "For," the Talmud says, "it is not seemly that a Jew should beat his wife."

Other Customs

The Polish Jew was very much attached to his long locks of hair, or *peasy*, which he wore on each temple in obedience to the command:—"Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard." For many centuries he walked about with these locks, which often reached as far as the knees. But about ten years ago the Russian Government thought seriously of making him look like other people whether he wished or not, and issued orders that men in *halats* were not to walk in the parks and public gardens, and that those who insisted on wearing *peasy* should have them cut off by the police. In their zeal the authorities often had the skirts of the *halats* cut off as well; but the *peasy* were got rid of by arresting their wearers, taking them to the nearest police-station, and clipping the long strands of hair.

Modern ideas penetrate even into the Polish ghetto, and, in the large towns at any rate, many old customs are slowly dying out from among a certain portion of the Jewish community, although others observe them as religiously as ever. The remarkable part of it is that they manage to keep the letter of the law whilst disregarding the spirit, and seem perfectly satisfied that they have done all that the Talmud requires of them. For instance, a Jew is forbidden to transact business or touch money on the Sabbath ; but almost every Jewish factor will take money on Saturday provided his fingers do not touch it except through a piece of stuff, paper, or a corner of his *halat.*

On the day of *Roszhaszan* the pious Jews are supposed to bathe in a stream of running water in order to cleanse themselves from all their sins. The idea of the command is to bathe in pure water, but the average devotee does not pay attention to this so long as the water is not still, but a running stream. The same thing is to be seen with the *mykva,* or ritualistic bath, which was instituted with the idea of cleansing the bather, who, however, simply gets into the water and out of it again. In the large and progressive Communes the executive committees wage war with this ignorance, which precludes the possibility of the people becoming more hygienic, that is, of attaining the real end implied in all these commands about bathing and purifying. But in the smaller ones it is a case of the blind leading blind. The *Kahals* are as averse to cleanliness as the

rest of the community, so that dirt and disease reign supreme.

A strict Jew will not eat *Tryfny*, that is, food which has not been prepared according to the prescribed rites. But almost every Polish Jew will drink water out of a glass in a Christian house, whereas he would not touch an earthenware mug or a cup. The fact that it has been washed by non-Jewish hands does not seem to trouble him. When he is about to eat a small piece of bread and fish, he must say a short prayer and just dip the tips of his fingers in water. But if he intends to take several mouthfuls, he must say a much longer prayer and immerse his hands in water as far as the wrists. In the railway stations in Poland the Jews can be seen wetting the tips of their fingers by putting them upon the frosty windows until the ice is melted, when they eat a small piece of bread or a mouthful of egg.

He may not buy bread from a non-Jewish baker unless the latter has a certificate from the communal Rabbinat that his flour is clean and free from all impurities, and has not come in contact with lard or any other fat. The Conservative Jews will not buy it even then, in spite of the safeguard that flour spoils as soon as it is moistened with grease. At Passover he eats *maca*, or thin cakes baked out of special flour. The wheat is carefully watched by men sent by the Rabbinat whilst still in flower. These men look after it day and night lest a shower come and wet it, when

it is unfit for its purpose. They do not let it out of their sight until it is put into sealed bags, ready threshed under their watchful eyes. The *maca* is baked by men only—women may not touch it. It consists of flour and water, without salt, and is eaten for seven days instead of ordinary bread.

The Sabbath is ushered in with singing and prayers. The hymn used at the table on these occasions is known as the *Maiufez* (How beautiful thou art). When the family can afford it, the table is lighted with silver or bronze candlesticks, with many branches. The day is spent in religious exercises and prayer at a Bethamidrash, from which the women are excluded.

A book could be filled with an account of the many customs which still keep the Polish Jew a man apart from the rest of the population. Some of them are only strange, others absolutely repulsive. The educated Jews make all the efforts possible to dissuade their co-religionists from practising them, but as yet they are clung to with a tenacity peculiar to the Hebrew. Such men cannot distinguish between the religious observances ordered by the Mosaic Law and the traditions to be found in the Talmud, traditions which often have no better authority than some long-deceased Rabbi who thought fit to write them, and which, however necessary they may have been at one time, are quite at variance with modern conditions, and only serve to keep their observers wrapt in ignorance and superstition. But when the more progressive members of the com-

munity attempt to abolish them they are met with a considerable amount of resistance. Nothing is so clung to as the rites and ceremonies in connection with the

Burial of the Dead

The dreary Jewish cemetery, with its flat tombstones, is always apart from those belonging to peoples of other faiths. No matter how small or poor it is, it contains a building from which the Polish passer-by turns with disgust and the educated Jew with horror.

When a Jew is sick to death, a Rabbi is called in to give him what comfort he can for his last moments. As soon as the breath is out of his body, the relations do their utmost to have the corpse removed as soon as possible. Russian law says that a body must lie three days before the coffin is closed; but the Jews take the risk of breaking it, and when a doctor has pronounced life to be extinct, remove it to the cemetery in a closed bier, which looks like a huge box on a platform of black wood. The friends and acquaintances follow it, but only the nearer relations enter the mysterious building. The others wait outside.

In the provincial cemeteries the room into which the corpse is taken is of the simplest description. A large table stands in the middle, supplied with a trough. The body is stripped and placed on it; and, if the deceased was a very pious man, water, the quantity of which is

prescribed by the Talmud, is thrown over his remains, whilst his friends say prayers for him. If there are fewer than ten people, the prayers are said to be of no avail, just as an oath witnessed by less than three persons, or one Rabbi, is invalid.

After the water has been poured over the corpse, an india-rubber tube is placed in the mouth, clean water pumped into it and the stomach pressed with wooden instruments like rolling-pins. This and syringes are used until the water which leaves the body is quite clear. Meanwhile, other women are busy sewing linen grave-clothes, which must be made near the corpse. The piece from which they are made cannot be cut. If the deceased were a man and pious, he is also dressed in the shirt worn by him during the great fast—the Day of Judgment. His hair and beard are then combed, his finger and toe nails carefully cleaned, and short sticks placed between his fingers, so that when the last trump calls him from his grave he will have something with which to raise his body. Gloves are then put on, a new earthenware basin broken, and two pieces placed over his eyes, lest he should see what is happening in the grave. After this the body is enveloped in a shroud, made of linen for men and thick tulle for women, taken out into the cemetery and put into the grave. No coffin is used, but if a man is a first-born son, double planks of wood are placed at each of his sides and over him; if not first-born, the planks are single. No wood is put under the body, in order that it may be in direct contact with

the earth. A bag of earth is also placed under his head in return for his life-work. The grave is then filled up, and the ceremony completed with prayers.

When a Polish Jew dies abroad and his remains are brought into the country for burial, the coffin is put into the grave without being opened, as Russian law forbids all coffins coming into the country to be touched. Often the *Kahal* makes a lot of difficulty about burying people in this way, and the heirs of the deceased have to pay a large fine before the coffin is admitted into the cemetery at all. There is a tradition among the Polish people that in such cases the authorities in the smaller Communes exhume the bodies at night, perform all the ceremonies just described, and replace them coffinless in their graves.

CHAPTER II

THE FUTURE—CONCLUDING REMARKS

THE growing power of the Bund, with its nationalistic theories and the general awakening of the Jewish masses, have caused even the Poles, little given to worrying about problems of the kind, to ask themselves whether the Jewish masses will assimilate, or whether they really mean to become a separate nation, with their own culture of the hated Jargon and their own aims and aspirations, to be a veritable and constant thorn in the flesh to Sclavonic sensibilities. Unhappily, the Poles know very little about the strangers who have been living with them for the last nine centuries, and it is therefore chiefly among the educated Jews that men and women qualified to speak about the future prospects of their race in Poland are to be found. The following opinions were given by the representatives of three groups, each with its own theory; and as all three work among the people of whom they speak, they may safely be considered as the best authorities on a very complicated question.

looks upon the question from an impartial point of view. I may add that he is a member of one of the Socialistic parties mentioned in Part II., and is considered an excellent judge of the Jewish question. He does not deny that separatism is strong among the Jewish masses, and says—

"Once this fact is admitted, two questions arise in connection with it:

"(1) *Is this separatism an unbreakable social law?* and

"(2) *Will not its very existence render any assimilation of the Polish and Jewish elements impossible by reason of the class and cultural antagonism which exist at present?*

"We must first of all look into the causes which have produced this antagonism.

"There is not the least doubt that, in spite of the difficulties which the process of assimilation has had to encounter, in spite of the superstitions, oppression and legislative restrictions which have widened the breach between them and the rest of the community, cultured Jews always tend, and still tend, to draw near to the nations among which they live.

"Such groups, by virtue of the natural laws of assimilation and by force of common interests, gradually lose their distinctive characteristics until nothing remains of

them but their religion and a few traces of their old culture.

"But with the masses we see a very different state of things. They preserve their distinctiveness of language and of custom. It would, however, be difficult to deny that, even here, assimilation has been, and still is, doing something. These masses have not been living in a complete state of cultural inertia. They have learned something from their surroundings. But the process has been so slow that it has evolved a strange, incongruous ethnical material, which is totally different from ancient Hebrew culture and still less like that of the community which surrounds it. You cannot possibly call the result a Jewish nation; it is nothing of the sort. It is rather a Jewish people, consisting of uncultured, unhappy masses, exclusive in their internal existence, cast off by the rest of the community, and yet a part of it, rooted into and unrootable from the soil in which they have not been allowed to develop normally.

"The Jews are not to blame for this separatism. Accidents of history, fatal to them, have caused it. The feudal system of the Middle Ages surrounded them with a wall of contempt and isolation. On the one hand, the social conditions and theories of the period made them a caste apart, a caste of merchants and middlemen; on the other, religious hatred persecuted and tortured them with all the cruelties that human inventiveness could conceive. They were obliged to engage in commerce and usury, and, as the theories of the times, most clearly

expressed in the doctrines of the Fathers of the Church, held all commerce in contempt, they bore the *odium* of a calling which they were forced to adopt. In Western Europe fanaticism and ignorance pursued them until the end of the eighteenth century. In Poland they were more fortunate for some time, because they were not, as in other countries, the property of the kings, but formed a separate people, enjoying a liberal autonomy.

"The Polish Republic had no middle class, and needed one; so, in opening the gates of its towns to the burghers who came from other countries, it received the Jews who had been driven from the German ghettoes. The political and religious toleration which prevailed in Poland until the middle of the seventeenth century assured them a complete cultural and religious liberty. But even then there was scarcely any tendency towards assimilation, because here, too, class distinctions formed an obstacle to the assimilation of any foreign elements. The condition of the Jews grew worse in the seventeenth century, when the towns became impoverished and the effects of reaction, civil war, and strife began to be felt throughout the country. They suffered terribly from the Cossack rebellions, whilst the kings, whose power was rapidly falling, were unable to enforce the statutes by which their quondam *protégés* had once profited.

"During a century and a half—that is, from the middle of the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century—the condition of the Jews grew rapidly worse; their poverty and ignorance increased, and their misfortunes

were multiplied. The consequence was that they separated further than ever from the rest of the community.

"The Four-years' Diet undertook the task of reforming their civil position, as it hoped to reform all classes and elements in the Republic.

"Butrymovicz's memorial—he was president of the Commission appointed to consider the Jewish question—was drawn up with the hope of assimilating them with the rest of the community. The Commission took a most liberal point of view, wishing to make them true citizens of the State by removing their disabilities and giving them civil responsibilities.

"There is historical evidence that many of the Jews themselves shared these hopes, whilst the part played by them in Kosciuszko's rising, and the fact that Berek Joselowicz, a Jew, raised a regiment, prove that even then there were Jews who considered themselves a part of the Polish nation. The fall of Poland arrested, or, at least, seriously impeded, this new development; but from this time we find that the idea of co-citizenship did not cease to exist.

"I believe that the simplest way in which to settle the Jewish question—that is, to bring about assimilation—is to treat it from a humane and perfectly just standpoint. The anti-Semite has widened the breach with his hatred and persecutions; and it is only fair to add that the Sionist, with his separatism and eccentricities, has done as much harm. Neither the one

nor the other has succeeded in curing the disease, because both have only torn open old wounds. They want to do what is sociologically an impossibility, that is, to take the Jews away from the communities in which they are living. What we ought to do is to stamp out and uproot all hatred and prejudices against the Jews, to wipe out all contempt for their uncultured masses, and to try to expiate our historical sins, persecutions and wrongs.

"We are now in a position to answer our two questions—

"(1) *Under normal conditions of development, which have hitherto been lacking in Poland as far as the Jewish problem is concerned, this separatism would be weakened to a considerable extent, because it is not an unbreakable social law, but the result of historical isolation, of persecution, and of want of culture.*

"(2) *The existence of this separatism would not make it impossible for the two elements to unite in common aims and interests, so long as a humane point of view and principles of justice were employed in our relations with the Jewish masses.*

"I will add that, with the exception of Poland, the Russian Empire, Galicia and Roumania, the Jewish question does not exist as far as cultural separatism is concerned.

"In Germany, it is true, semi-official anti-Semitism exists; in Austria, and especially in Vienna, it prevails

to a great extent; in France, nationalism organised the anti-Dreyfus cabal. But these are forms of official and political intrigue, and the question, in the real sense of the term, does not and cannot exist. It is only apparent antagonism, far weaker, as a matter of fact, than the class antagonism which is going on in the same countries.

"There was a time when anti-Semitism grew silent in Poland also. Four or five decades ago, the two elements united under the watchword of brotherhood. It broke out afresh under the heavy yoke of reaction, and was met with another kind of reaction, of the Jewish element, which took the form of Sionism and Jewish nationalism.

"To-day, when we have had time to look at these two movements quietly, neither of them presents very dangerous qualities. Sionism is an abortive theory—for it does not take the Jews from the Land of Tribulation to the Land of Promise. As to Jewish nationalism, it is nothing more than a very natural answer to anti-Semitism, and will fall to pieces as soon as the theory of union of the two elements has become a fact.

"But the way in which the Jews are defending themselves at present is the best proof of what persecution, contempt and civil disabilities can effect. These same people, who bore oppression and hatred with the mildness of lambs for so long, have suddenly changed into men and are fighting in their self-defence with an energy which awakes wonder. Nobody supposed that those people

who seemed to be resigned to their fate as slaves of the ghetto, socially and legally oppressed, would rise and fight with such courage. But these efforts have nothing in common with nationalism. These outbursts of anger will subside as soon as the future lies clear and straight before them, as soon as they are citizens with the same rights as the rest of the community. Then the separatism of the masses will be wiped away; but it must last so long as disabilities, to say nothing of the contemptuous and hostile treatment from the anti-Semitic part of the community, last. This aiming at a separate culture is simply the result of separatist treatment from the other element. The Jews, unable to develop after the pattern of the culture which surrounds them, and equally unable to obtain real toleration, instinctively defend themselves by adopting their own means of cultural development. One thing remains to be considered, and that is the ignorance of the Jewish masses, an ignorance which goes side by side with abject poverty and boundless misery.

"I know you will say that the Jewish question chiefly concerns the poorest members of the Jewish community, and that the theory of assimilation cannot break through their ignorance nor make any headway in the face of the hunger and privations these people perpetually suffer. But here we have the prospect of help from the masses of the Polish community, of the solidarity of the two proletariats, which, drawn together by common interests and hardships, will gradually lose all separatist feelings.

"In a word, the Jewish question in Poland is, in my opinion, a question of the moment—a question of evolution. The prospect of a new form of political life is bound up with the emancipation of the Jews. This new state of things must inevitably sweep away all differences, and assimilation will follow as a natural consequence."

THE SECOND SPEAKER,

a manwho has done and is still doing good work for the Polish and Jewish communities, is an assimilated Jew, advocates assimilation and accuses the Sionists and the Jewish nationalists of acting in direct opposition to the real welfare of the Jewish masses in Poland. He says—

"The chief elements necessary for the making of a nation are territory, a living language, and culture—all of which must be the nation's own.

"The first national element which the Jews lack is territory. Neither have they their own living language. They generally speak the languages of the nations among which they live—German, French, English, etc. In Poland the minority feel, think, and make themselves understood in Polish; the majority speaks a language they adopted during the long period they passed on German soil.

"The third element is an individual culture, and includes religious faith, manners and customs, legislative

and political organisations, education. That part of culture which we call religious faith belongs entirely to the Jews. But when we come to manners and customs, even in those which are quite connected with their religion, we find that many of them differ from those of their co-religionists who inhabit different countries. Dress also comes under the heading of culture. But here, too, we shall look in vain for any uniformity. The Polish Jew, with his *halat*, once forced upon him by law, differs equally from the average Jewish workman in France, with his blue blouse; from the middle-class Jew in England, with his felt hat and morning coat; and the Turkish Jew in his loose trousers and red fez. As to legislative and political organisations —the Jewish people live under the political and legislative conditions of the nations among which they live. The same must be said of their educational standard.

"But the Sionists and the Jewish nationalists in Poland and Russia affirm that the Jews are a nation and defend their nationality, in spite of the fact that they lack the three chief elements. This way of defending Jewish nationalism, *i.e.* by affirming that it exists, is employed almost *entirely* by the Polish and Russian Jews. But he who will decide for or against the existence of a Jewish nation cannot confine himself to those Jews who live upon what once belonged to the Polish Republic, for they only form one half of the Jews at present living on the earth's surface. But even if we judge of the Jews here apart from those in other parts of the world, great

doubts arise as to whether they can be said to possess the necessary national elements. Their most marked characteristic is their religious conservatism, which serves to strengthen separatism. One instance will be found in the way in which they cling to the long beard and the locks of hair (*peasy*).

"As a nation, they also had their national dress. But history tells us that in Poland during the Piast dynasty they wore the national dress of the Poles, and that in the Jagiellon dynasty, in obedience to a law passed in order to separate them from the rest of the community, they wore a distinctive form of dress. Therefore, neither the long beards and *peasy*, the results of a badly-understood religious law, nor yet the *halăt*, is a national characteristic. The *halăt* is looked upon by the Jew who wears it as his own, and he clings to it with a tenacity which only proves his ignorance. One can compare him to a slave who has grown so used to his fetters and his bondage that he is ready to fight to the bitter end with all who try to take away his chains, which he thinks belong to him, and are his birthright given by God.

"The most important national element is language. The Jewish Separatists tell us that the Jewish masses speak their own language. There is historical evidence that the Jews settled in Germany as early as the fourth century after Christ. They did not immigrate into Poland until the tenth century, when they brought with them a corrupt Jargon, a bad form of German,

revolting to all ethical sense of sound and unworthy of the sons of Israel.

"And as neither the black *halat*, the long beard and *peasy*, nor the Jargon belong to the national characteristics of the Jews in Poland, in what do these characteristics consist? How are the nationalists going to make out a case of these proofs of ignorance, superstition and conservatism?

"Besides, will it be convenient and practicable to acknowledge the Jews in Poland and Russia as a separate nation, or will it be good for Jewish interests? And here again we must put the question of language first, as the most important national element. Doctor Arthur Ruppin, a great authority on the Jewish question, says that the Jargon has no literary development before it. His words are—'The Jewish Jargon does not lend itself to the expression of elevated thoughts.' And who of the friends of the Jewish masses would wish to give them a language which cannot serve them in the expression of their elevated thoughts? I suppose only those who do not consider them capable of high thinking and would like to tie them down with the fetters of the jargon. But there are other considerations of the value of the Jargon as a national language. In permitting it to be and remain their national language, the Jews run a risk in using a German form of speech whilst living among a Sclav people. It is not surprising that all that is German awakens hatred in the hearts of the Poles, for a deadly struggle has been going on

between the two for centuries, and whereas, with the progress of culture, it will be easy for the Jew in Poland to pass from his Jargon to German, it will be far more difficult for him to leave it for the Polish language. This is why the Poles fear that they will see German theatres, newspapers and schools established in their midst by the Jewish population which lives on their territory. Even in ordinary times this would be distasteful to the Poles; but in the event of war with Germany this resentment would probably be fanned to a terrible extent and result in the most unfortunate consequences for the Jewish population. History shows us how much the Jews in Posen and Galicia have been attracted by German culture. Once the Jargon was sanctioned as a national language any liberal-minded government would establish elementary, middle and higher schools, with Jargon teachers, to say nothing of Jargon lectures in the Universities and polytechnics, so that a certain amount of distrust would grow up between the two nations, the Polish and Jewish, living on the same territory, and it is doubtful if this would lead to the well-being of the Jews.

"The ignorant Jewish masses do not realise this, but the same excuse cannot be made for their leaders, who tell them: "Why, the Jargon is yours! You have a right to it! Defend it with all your might! Don't let it be taken away from you, for it is your pride and your national property! The Sionists, on the other hand, understand all the hideousness of the Jargon.

They again want millions of young Jews and Jewesses to worry their brains learning a difficult and strange language, namely Hebrew. It is absurd of them to wish people living in the twentieth century to adopt the century's culture through the medium of the language of Moses, David and Isaiah. The language of the Old Testament, with little more than 4,000 words, cannot possibly supply the needs of philosophy, science and sociology which man has created during the 2,000 years and more which have elapsed since Hebrew ceased to be a living language, and only a living language can adapt itself to development and enlargement. As far back as 500 years before the birth of Christ it ceased to be their national language, and was but the ancient language of the Scriptures, which had been replaced in everyday life by that of the Chaldeans. During the first centuries of the Christian era, the intellectual Jews living in Alexandria used Greek, and those in Babylon the language of the Syrians. From the seventh century, for nearly 500 years, Arabic was spoken by the intellectual Jews, then Spanish and, to a certain extent, French. Modern Hebrew would therefore have to be formed for the use of the Jews in the nation of which the Sionist dreams. This would not be a practical way out of the difficulty, and I affirm that neither the formation of a new Hebrew language, nor the retention of the Jargon of the ignorant Jewish masses living in Poland as a national language, would contribute

one whit to their happiness, well-being or cultural progress.

"But even in Palestine, before they were scattered over the earth, the Jews did not possess the national sentiments as we understand them to-day, for the simple reason that they did not exist at that time. This sentiment only began to appear with the Renascence. Before that there were peoples rather than nations, and the word 'fatherland' had a strictly political meaning. The Jews discarded their language whilst they were still on their own territory. They finished their national career when nationalism had its chief stronghold in religion. Modern nationalism is absolutely strange to them; it does not emanate from their traditions or from their most brilliant era, and could not exist in the breasts of the ancient Jewish people because the very emotions which are understood under the word nationalism to-day did not exist then. The tragedy of the whole Jewish question in Poland lies in the fact that the leaders of the Jewish masses, instead of teaching them to cast off the *halat*, the Jargon and the *peasy*, and to make themselves like the other people of Europe whilst retaining all that is worthy in their customs and religion, use the revival to push them further and further back into separatism. Until they are pulled out of this pit of ignorance, assimilation, the only key to the problem, cannot be effected."

THE THIRD SPEAKER,

a Separatist, echoes the feelings of the ghetto at the present moment and says—

"The Jewish question in Poland is one of the gravest which the community has to face. Every one is agreed —I suppose—that in order to discuss a problem in connection with any part of the community, it is necessary to know something about that part. And yet the Poles, on the whole, know little or nothing about the Jews who have lived among them for so many centuries. To know assimilated Jews is not to know the Jews at all, for these people, who have left the race to which they once belonged, have absolutely nothing in common with them. Such only represent a very small proportion of the Jewish people, and not the whole Jewish nation in Poland. The days when units of this nation, thirsting for light and knowledge, were obliged to break away from their own, have gone—and for ever, for the gates of the ghetto are opened and its barriers broken down. A stream of light has penetrated into the Jewish hovels, and is chasing away the prejudices and superstitions born of the slavery of centuries. The Jewish people are changed; they are under the influence of a renascence. They have awakened, and to-day we can see the first effects of the revival. The Jew now feels that he is a man; that he has a soul; that he commits a sin towards himself and humanity in misshaping it by trying to make it like other people's; that it is a lie and a

debasing one to destroy his own individuality; and that his own 'I' has the right to be and to assert itself. There is nothing strange or unnatural about this. We have other examples of a similar revival among the Lithuanians and the Ruthenians. The only difference is that people are not surprised at them, and think that the Jews alone have no right to assert their nationality. And so this revival of theirs is looked upon as something abnormal, as a fad or a whim of a few fanatics, as something which the masses do not feel. People in Poland are so fond of saying that the assimilation of the Jews in the country is the only way out of the Jewish question, that they forget to ask the most important factors in the process, the Jewish masses, what they think about it; and, so far, they have been silent too. Now that they are beginning to have experience, and to think about their future at all, they plainly show that they do not intend to assimilate. True, they long to develop, to find light and knowledge, to live politically, to live as human beings; but they want to do it in their own way. They know that they must work and suffer before they can attain their goal, but they want to work and suffer as Jews and not as Poles, for they will not give up that which is dearer than all to a nation, their own souls.

"'There is not a Jewish nation!' some people cry; 'they have not even got their own language.' 'What is this poor, obscure Jewish culture?' we hear others ask.

"My answer is, that the Jews are a nation, because they look upon themselves as such, and any given ethnical group has the right to choose whatever nationality it thinks fit. What determines nationality? Surely, amongst other things, language, customs, historical traditions, culture, and psychic characteristics. The hereditary language of the Jews is the so-called 'Jargon,' spoken by some millions of people. True, this 'Jargon' is a mixture of many tongues, a sort of patchwork of several elements, but that is a question for the linguists; a form of speech by which people can express their thoughts has every right to be called a language. The 'Jargon' has served the Jews for centuries; for centuries it has grown side by side with them, with their thoughts, hopes and longings, with their few joys and many sufferings. As the masses developed, so has it grown richer and developed its vocabulary. It has words for legends and fables, and words for philosophy and history.

"Its literature also has its history. The Yiddish pamphlets you see in the Jews' hands to-day are not the first examples of written and published thought which the ghetto has seen. The first 'Jargon' writings appeared in Poland during the sixteenth century. They were mostly of a religious character, and included fragments of the Bible, commentaries to the Book of Job, translations of the Psalms, etc. As it chiefly served the lower classes of the people and women who did not know any Hebrew, the character of the literature did not

undergo any great change until the latter part of the nineteenth century. The second period contains a lot of novels and 'romances' of an erotic nature, written by people without much talent. The new generation of women, who had thrown off the traditions of their grandmothers and did not yet understand the new needs of their race, liked the scandalous novels which then appeared in Yiddish. It was only towards the end of the last century that the new era in 'Jargon' literature began, and writings formed on European models became popular. America was the centre of the new development. Hundreds of 'Jargon' papers, pamphlets and books were published there. The Jews in Poland, Russia, Lithuania, and Galicia followed the good example. But it was America that gave 'Jargon' literature its democratic colouring. One proof of the desire the Jews in Poland feel for national culture is the ever-increasing number of publishing firms and of the 'Jargon' newspaper circulation. The *Freind* had a circulation of 40,000 copies annually before it had been founded two years.

"Jewish culture is poor, I admit. But if richness of culture is to justify nations well endowed in forcing their spirit upon poorer nations, then the Prussians are justified in their policy of trying to stamp out all culture but their own. And yet all honest folk condemn their 'civilising' activity.

"All the Jew wants is to profit by modern progress in his own way, and not to give up his national indi-

viduality in order to benefit by the progress made by civilisation. He is confronted by all sorts of difficulties; by unwillingness and defiance. And why? Is a hard and fast method of training indispensable to human happiness? One so often hears it said that it is a sin to crush individuality; that a school ought to develop it; that its business is to make not dolls, but men and women. This rule ought to apply to all people and to all nationalities, and no less to the Jews. But there are rumours afloat that this Separatist theory is a dangerous one for the rest of the community; that it is hostile to it. Such rumours are entirely false. They are set afloat by those who, having left their own people, do not know anything about and therefore misjudge them. Do you really think that, because a Jew talks his own language, he cannot understand that others have their own hopes and aims, that he cannot understand other people's ideals? Do you really think that a Jew can become a 'man' only by casting off his own 'I,' and that the only culture which can raise the Jews in Poland is Polish culture? If the community at large has really become so imbued with the insipid ideas of the Judo-Assimilators, it is high time that such rumours, harmful to true Jewish interests, were dispelled. It is time that they got to know the Jewish masses better. Then they would find out for themselves that Jewish separatism has nothing in common with hostility. In a word, the Jewish masses want to live, feel they have the right to live, and are ready to fight for that right."

Concluding Remarks

So far, the Separatists have the last word, because they are likely to hold sway in the ghettoes and Jewish settlements of Poland for some time to come. Even the Assimilators admit that the realisation of their dreams has been indefinitely postponed by the revival among the Jewish masses. Mr. Alexander Kraushar, the historian, himself an Assimilator, fears that the influence of the Bund has postponed the process for a long time to come.

A great change is noticeable in the attitude of the Jewish population during the eight years I have spent in the country. To-day, one must go to the remote districts, where the absence of post and railroad and a long distance from the frontier make it difficult to spread new ideas, in order to find the old spirit which used to exist between the Polish and Jewish elements. Not only are the masses averse to assimilation—as indeed, they always were, but their latent, passive dislike of the Gentile has, during the last half decade, developed into active antagonism. They have realised that their aims and aspirations are at variance with those of the rest of the community, and, seeing the power they possess, exercise it to the utmost in order to realise their ambitions. In the large towns this hostility is often evident in the shops, *i. e.* in the quarter where the "goya" is the best customer. Here there is

the twofold hatred—that of the Jew for the Gentile, and of him who has little for him who has, or is supposed to have, much.

The missionaries who come to Poland from other countries have reason to complain of a similar change in the attitude of the people they attempt to preach to, and the number of their converts has fallen off considerably during the past few years. One cannot help wondering whether the good people in Western Europe know why the Polish Jew, for whose conversion they often give large sums of money, changes his faith. There are several reasons why he should do so. He is released from paying the communal tax, free to cross and recross the frontier even after a prolonged stay abroad, and has got rid of the word "Jew" from his passport. In a man of education, he is no longer under the restrictions which prevented him from becoming a member of the legal profession—for till recently only a certain percentage of barristers could be Jews. But the fact that some Jewish merchant comes to the missionary to be baptized does not make him change his life or begin to assimilate with the rest of the community. To all intents and purposes he is the same man as he was before, with the trivial difference that he keeps his shop open on Saturday and shuts it on Sunday. Can a leopard change his skin? He had ceased to attend the synagogue long ago, for really devout Jews do not fall into the hands of the missionaries. True, they will spend hours in arguing a point

with them, and enjoy the exercise immensely; but only a man who is very sure of his faith will venture to do that. It is a common thing to hear a Jew say that he is not strong enough to argue with the adversary; so he keeps away, for fear the missionary should overpower him with arguments. No, the religious man does not go to be baptized, as a rule. The neophyte is a practical person. He changes his faith either because he wants to free himself of the restrictions which the Russian lays upon his co-religionists, or else to escape the duties of his Commune. But the revival of the ghetto has made itself felt among his class also. Not only is public opinion stronger against him than a few years ago, when all but the most conservative devotees understood why he escaped the disabilities and restrictions whilst remaining at heart a Jew; but the day of his civil deliverance is at hand, and he knows it. The part which his co-religionists are playing in the revolution assures him that he need no longer be baptized in order to get what he wants. Sometimes he is ready to meet his missionary with defiance; for he always resented his intrusion, and does not hesitate to show it now that he can make no further use of him.

As to the well-to-do Jewish neophytes, they prefer to enter the Roman Catholic Church. It is a step nearer the Polish community, and, as he or she is generally baptized in order to be able to marry a Pole, the matter is considerably simplified. It is not a rare thing to find Jewish families in which one or two daughters are

Roman Catholics and married to Poles, whilst the parents still retain their old religion, are buried in the Jewish cemetery when they die, and leave money for memorial services to be held in the synagogue. The other daughters remain Jewish if they marry or intend to marry Jews, or become Protestants if they marry Englishmen or Germans. The sons, on the other hand, will not be in a hurry to change their religion unless the exigencies of their business require it, for unless they are very rich they will find it hard to get Polish wives. The Poles are usually averse to allying themselves by marriage with converted Jews or those of Jewish extraction; and though a bankrupt noble may do so under the pressure of debt, his sister will often prefer to remain single or poor rather than adopt a Jewish name.

But a change has come over the attitude of such Jews also in the matter of conversion, and in their relations with the Polish community. Not only have many of them withdrawn their names from charitable organisations which benefit the Polish poor, and ceased to take an active part in the movements started and supported by the Poles, but they do not get baptized into the Christian religion. There are to-day many rich Polish Jews who will give their children the advantages of a liberal European education, and forbid them to marry Poles and converted Jews. And often, though the members of the family can speak Polish, they use one of the several other languages they know at home.

Many Poles say that they do this because their accent—a relic of the ghetto and the Jargon—is not so noticeable when they speak French or English as in Polish. And yet there are still many Jewish houses where all the holidays of the Polish community are observed, where there is a tree at Christmas time and a feast with the traditional ham, eggs and sucking-pig at Easter (not, of course, consecrated by the priest), but where the members of the household are not baptized, although priests of the Roman Church visit them and are their confidential friends, to be appealed to in times of difficulty and trouble.

So neither the man who lives in the ghetto and wears a *halat*, nor his brother who has bought a foreign title, is anxious to be baptized. Is it not because they know the day of their civil emancipation is at hand, because they know that before long they will be able to send their sons into the army, navy and civil service at their will, and be free to live all over the Russian Empire? Is it not because they know that their power, even now indisputable, will soon be acknowledged—that what has been their back-door influence will soon become that of the first places in the administration of the Empire? There is little doubt that, once their civil disabilities are removed, they come to the front in every walk of life; for even whilst hampered by disabilities they have a power no other race in the world possesses, a power the Jewish banker exercises on behalf of his poorest brother, a power nobody can overcome, for it is the power of

gold. Count Witte is reported to have told a Jewish deputation that whereas Germany is in the hands of the Jews, and the English monarchy supported by Jewish gold, the same thing would not happen in Russia, because the Tsar was determined to be the ruler of his own Empire. It does not matter whether the story is true or not; what does matter is that it echoes the spirit of Russian bureaucracy which would crush the progress of Jewish emancipation for very fear of the consequences to its own power. It is this fear which makes them oppose the efforts of those *Kahals* which strive to educate Jewish youths by establishing schools and fitting them to compete with their Russian and Polish rivals. An official in Warsaw also echoed the opinion of his class when he said: "The Government will not give the Jews civil rights if they can help it, because they are afraid. The Jews are much cleverer than we. They are everywhere, and doing everything. The Cadet Club in Petersburg is full of them; they are the life and soul of the meetings. The Russian members are indifferent or occupied elsewhere. When the Jews do get their disabilities removed—and the day will come sooner or later—they will rule the Empire officially. *De facto*, they are the masters at the present moment. The young men of the civil service who ought to be energetic and save the situation, are letting things slip through their fingers. All they think about is amusement and getting their salaries raised. They come to work late and go away early. When the Jew effects an entrance in their

midst, he will sweep them off the board like so many pieces of paper."

So much for local opinion. Meanwhile, the struggle which is convulsing the Empire sends thousands of Jews from the country. According to the latest statistics, more than 250,000 Jewish emigrants left Russia in 1905, as against 100,000 for the preceding year. Most of them were bound for England and the United States, and it is computed that 80% came from Poland and Lithuania. At one time only the economic failures and incapables, the men who were too ignorant or unhealthy to find work at home, used to emigrate. Now the political waste-products of the revolution have been added to them. It is with both these classes of immigrant, with the sweated tailor and boot-maker as well as the "politician" and the bomb-maker, that the English-speaking peoples have to deal.

However hospitable a host is, however addicted to keeping open house, he generally demands some particulars of the guests he receives under his roof. He likes to know a little of their characters, of their past lives and environments, of their aims and ambitions, for if he does not take precautions and secure their moral passport, he is in danger of discovering, when it is too late, that he is entertaining a thief unawares who has robbed him of his household gods, his domestic happiness—sometimes of his honour. So it is with nations. They owe themselves the duty of enquiring into the character aud capabilities of the

strangers who settle among them, their reasons for immigrating, their civil and economic worth. For the same reasons, the English-speaking peoples should know something of those Polish Jews, who, from time to time, gather on their squares and embankments, bearing banners with Yiddish inscriptions, roaring hoarsely in a strange language, moving away from the police as from their natural enemies, and losing no opportunity of raising a shout against them.

They have the right to know the general tendency of the Jargon papers which are distributed among the crowds on these occasions. More than this, they have the right to know why the people who compose these crowds left the land of their birth, whether they are likely to conform to the laws which bind the members of the community together, to raise or lower the moral standard of living in the land of their adoption, and to contribute, by their industry and their attainments, to the well-being of those classes with which they will be brought in contact.

It has been the aim of the preceding pages to answer, at least in part, these questions.

THE END

Richard Clay & Sons, Limited, London and Bungay.